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THE WHOLE

WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

90357

MR. JOHN FLAVEL,

Late MINISTER of the GOSPEL at *Dartmouth* in *Devon*.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

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A SAINT INDEED.

OR,

The great WORK of a CHRISTIAN, opened and preſſed,

From Proverbs iv. 23.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To my dearly beloved and longed for, the Flock of Jeſus Chriſt in *Dartmouth*, over whom the Holy Ghoſt hath made me an Overſeer: Sound Judgment, true Zeal, and unſtained Purity, are heartily wiſhed.

My dear Friends,

THERE are three ſad ſights with which our eyes ſhould continually affect our hearts: The (1.) Is to behold in every place, ſo many profane and diſſolute ones, who bear the very image of Satan; the face of whoſe converſation plainly diſcovers what they are, and whither they are going, Philip. iii. 18, 19. Theſe look like themſelves, the children of wrath. The (2.) Is to ſee ſo many curſed hypocrites artificially diſguiſing themſelves, and with marvellous dexterity acting the parts of ſaints, ſo that even a judicious eye may ſometimes miſtake the *ſimilar workings* of the Spirit on them, for his *ſaving workings* on others: To hear ſuch a perſon conferring, praying, bewailing his corruptions, and talking of his experiences; would eaſily perſuade a man to believe that he hath the heart, as well as the face, of a ſincere Chriſtian: For,

Sic oculos, ſic ille manus, ſic ora ferebat.

So the people of God do ſpeak, ſo they pray, and even ſo they open their conditions: Theſe look like ſaints, but are none. The (3.) Is to ſee ſo many real ſaints, in whom the Spirit of truth is, who yet, through the impetuous workings of their corruptions, and neglecting of the watch over their hearts,

do often fall into ſuch ſcandalous practices, that they look like hypocrites, though they are not ſo.

Theſe are three ſad ſights indeed, and O that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep abundantly over them all!

For the *firſt*, I would mourn heartily, conſidering that they (ſo continuing) muſt be damned eternally, 2 Theſſ. i. 8, 9. 1 Cor. vi. 9.

For the *ſecond*, I would both weep and tremble, conſidering that they (ſo abiding) muſt be damned doubly, Matth. xxiv. 51.

And for the third, no leſs than any of the reſt, becauſe, though they themſelves may, and ſhall be ſaved, yet their examples make faſt the bonds of death upon both the former, Matth. xviii. 7. 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

Alas! that ever they ſhould ſhed the blood of others ſouls, for whom Chriſt ſhed his own blood! That ever they ſhould be *cruel* to others, who have found Chriſt ſo *kind* to them! I know they dare not do it directly and intentionally, but ſo it proves occaſionally and eventually. Suffer me here to digreſs a little, and expoſtulate with theſe prejudiced and hardened ſouls, I will preſently return to you again. O why do you miſchieve your own ſouls by other mens examples? Becauſe they ſtumble and break their ſhins, will you fall and break your necks? I deſire all ſuch as harden themſelves by theſe things, and take up a good opinion of their own deplorable condition, would ſoberly conſider, and anſwer theſe three queries.

Query 1. Doth religion any way countenance or patronize the ſinful practices of its profeſſors? Or doth it not rather impartially and ſeverely condemn them? It is the glory of the Chriſtian religion, that it is pure and undefiled, Jam. i. 27. No doctrine ſo holy, Pſalm xix. 8. Nor doth any make more proviſion for an holy life, Tit. ii. 11, 12. Indeed there is a caſe wherein we may charge the evil practices of men upon their principles, but that is when their practices naturally flow from, and neceſſarily follow their principles: As for example, if I ſee a Papiſt ſin boldly, I may charge it upon his principles, for they ſet pardons to ſale, and ſo make way for looſeneſs. If I ſee an Arminian ſlight the grace of God, and proudly advance himſelf, I may cry ſhame upon his principles, which directly lead to it: But can I do ſo where ſuch practices are condemned, and provided againſt by their own avowed principles who commit them?

Query 2. Is it not a moſt irrational thing to let fly at religion

because of the scandalous ways of some, whilst, in the mean time, you wholly slight and over-look the holy and heavenly conversation of many others? Are all that profess godliness loose and careless in their lives? No, some are an ornament to their profession, and the glory of Christ: And why must the innocent be condemned with the guilty? Why the eleven, for one Judas?

Query 3. If you condemn religion because of the scandalous lives of some that profess it, must you not then cast off all religion in the world, and turn down-right atheists? Surely this is the consequent of it; For what religion is there, but some that profess it walk contrary to their profession? And then, as Constantine told the Novation, you must set up a ladder, and go to heaven by yourself.

But, alas! it is not our printed apologies for religion, but the visible reformations of its professors, that must both salve its honour, and remove those fatal stumbling-blocks at which the blind world strikes, and falls into eternal perdition.

Now there are two ways by which this may be effected: *First*, By convincing the consciences of professors of their miscarriages, and the evil aggravations of them. *Secondly*, By medicating the heart, and cleansing the fountain whence they proceed. In the *first* of these, a worthy and eminent servant of Christ hath lately laboured, holding a clear gospel-glass before the faces of professors, which truly represents their spots and blemishes: if he that reads it will consider, apply, and practise, it shall doubtless turn to his salvation; but, if it turn to no good account to him that reads it, I know it shall turn to a testimony for him that wrote it. The *second* is a principal design of this small treatise, the subject whereof is exceeding weighty, and of daily use to the people of God; though the manner of handling it be attended with many defects and weaknesses: every one cannot be excellent, who yet may be useful. *See Gospel-glass.*

I will exercise your patience no longer than whilst I tell you,

1. Why I publish it to the view of the world.
2. Why I direct it particularly to you.

First, For the publication of it, take this sincere and brief account, That as I was led to this subject by a special providence, so to the publication of it by a kind of necessity: the providence at first leading me to it, was this, A dear and choice friend of my intimate acquaintance being under much inward trouble, upon the account of some special heart-disorder,

opened the caſe to me, and earneſtly requeſted ſome rules and helps in that particular; whilſt I was bending my thoughts to that ſpecial caſe, divers other caſes of like importance (ſome of which were dependant upon that conſideration) occurred to my thoughts, and this ſcripture, which I have inſiſted upon, preſented itſelf, as a fit foundation for the whole diſcourſe; which being lengthened out to what you ſee, divers friends requeſted me to tranſcribe for their uſe, divers of the caſes here handled, and ſome others begged me to publiſh the whole, to which I was in a manner neceſſitated, to ſave the pains of tranſcribing, which to me is a very tedious, and tireſome work: and juſt as I had almoſt finiſhed the copy, an opportunity preſented (and that ſomewhat ſtrangely) to make it public. So that from firſt to laſt, I have been carried beyond my firſt intentions in this thing.

Objection. If any ſay, The world is even cloyed with books, and therefore though the diſcourſe be neceſſary, yet the publication is needleſs.

Solution 1. I anſwer, There are multitudes of books indeed, and of them many concern not themſelves about root-truths, and practical godlineſs, but ſpend their ſtrength upon impractical notions, and frivolous controverſies; many alſo ſtrike at root-truths, and endeavour to undermine the power of godlineſs; and ſome there are that nouriſh the root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the great truths of the goſpel, that they may be bread for ſouls to live and feed on: Now, though I could wiſh that thoſe who have handled the pen of the ſcribe, had better employed their time and pains, than to obtrude ſuch uſeleſs diſcourſes upon the world; yet for books of the latter rank, I ſay, that when huſbandmen complain of too much corn, let Chriſtians complain of too many ſuch books.

2. And if you be ſo highly conceited of your own furniture and ability, that ſuch books are needleſs to you; if you let them alone, they will do you no hurt, and other poor hungry ſouls will be glad of them, and bleſs God for what you deſpiſe and leave.

Objection. If it be ſaid that ſeveral of the caſes here handled touch not your condition, I anſwer,

Solution 1. That which is not your condition may be another's condition. If you be placed in an eaſy, full and proſperous ſtate, and ſo have no need of the helps here offered to ſupport your hearts under pinching wants, others are forced to live by faith for every day's proviſion: If you be dandled upon the knee of providence, ſome of your brethren are under

its feet: If you have inward peace and tranquillity of spirit, and so need not the counsels here given, to ward off those desperate conclusions that poor afflicted souls are ready to draw upon themselves at such a time; yet it may be a word in season to them, and they may say as David to Abigail, "Blessed "be thou of the Lord, and blessed be thy advice."

2. That may be your condition shortly, which is not your condition at present; say not, thy mountain stands strong, thou shalt never be moved: there are changes in the right-hand of the Most High; and then those truths which are little more esteemed than hedge-fruits, will be as apples of gold in pictures of silver. In Jer. xxxiii. 10, 11. the prophet there teaches the Jews (who then dwelt in their own houses) how to defend their religion in Babylon, and what they should say to the Chaldeans there, and therefore that verse is written in Chaldee. So much for the reasons of its publication. Next, for the dedication of it to you, I was induced thereto by the consideration,

1. Of the relation I have to you above all the people in the world: I look upon my gifts as yours, my time as yours, and all the talents I am intrusted with, as yours: it is not with you as with a woman whose husband is dead, and so is freed from the law of her husband, the relation still continues, and so do all the mutual duties of it.

2. By the consideration of my necessitated absence from you, I would not that personal absence should by insensible degrees untwist (as usually it doth) the cord of friendship; and therefore I have endeavoured (as absent friends use to do) to preserve and strengthen it by this small remembrance. It was Vespasian's answer to Apollonius, when he desired access for two philosophers, 'My doors (said Vespasian) are always open to 'philosophers, but my very breast is open to thee.' I cannot say with him, my doors are open for the free access of friends, being by a sad providence shut against myself; but this I can say, my very breast is still open to you; you are as dear to me as ever.

3. Another inducement (and indeed the main) was the perpetual usefulness and necessity of these truths for you, which you will have continual need of: And I know few of you have such happy memories to retain, and I cannot be always with you to inculcate these things, but *litera scripta manet*. I was willing to leave this with you as a legacy, as a testimony of sincere love for, and care over you: this may counsel and direct you when I cannot: I may be rendered useless to you by

a civil or natural death; but this will out-live me, and oh that it may serve your souls when I am silent in the dust.

To hasten now to a conclusion, I have only these three requests to you, which I earnestly beseech you not to deny me; yea, I charge you, as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to slight these requests.

1. Above all other studies in the world, study your own hearts: waste not a minute more of your precious time about frivolous and sapless controversies. It is reported even of Bellarmine (how truly I examine not) * *Quod a studiis scholasticae theologiae averteretur fere nauseabundus, quoniam succo carebant liquidae pietatis*, (*i. e.*) he turned with loathing from the study of school-divinity, because it wanted the sweet juice of piety; I had rather it should be said of you, as one said of † Swinkfeldius, ("He wanted a regular head, but not an honest "heart") than that you should have regular heads, and irregular hearts. My dear flock, I have according to the grace given me, laboured in the course of my ministry among you, to feed you with the heart-strengthening bread of practical doctrine; and I do assure you, it is far better you should have the sweet and saving impressions of gospel-truths feelingly and powerfully conveyed to your hearts, than only to understand them by a bare ratiocination, or dry syllogistical inference. Leave trifling studies to such as have time lying on their hands, and know not how to employ it: remember you are at the door of eternity, and have other work to do; those hours you spend upon heart-work in your closets, are the golden spots of all your time, and will have the sweetest influence up to your last hour. Never forget these sermons I preached to you upon that subject, from 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. Heart-work is weighty, and difficult work; an error there, may cost you your souls: I may say of it, as Augustine speaks of the doctrine of the Trinity, *Nihilo facilius aut periculosius erratur*; A man can err in nothing more easily or more dangerously. O then study your hearts.

2. My next request is, That you will carefully look to your conversations, and be accurate in all your ways, hold forth the word of life: be sure by the strictness and holiness of your lives, to settle yourselves in the very consciences of your enemies. Remember that your lives must be produced in the great day, to judge the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2. O then, what manner of persons ought you to be! you have many eyes over you;

* *Fuligattus in vita Bellarm.*

† *Caput regulatum illi defuit, cor bonum non defuit.*

the omniſcient eye of God, that ſearches heart and reins, Rev. ii. 23. the vigilant eye of Satan, Job i. 7, 8. the envious eyes of enemies, that curiouſly obſerve you, Pſal. v. 8. the quick and obſervant eye of conſcience, which none of your actions eſcape, Rom. ix. 1.

O then be preciſe, and accurate, in all manner of converſation; keep up the power of godlineſs in your cloſets and families, and then you will not let it fall in your more public employments and converſes in the world: I have often told you, that it is the honour of the goſpel, that it makes the beſt parents and children, the beſt maſters and ſervants, the beſt husbands and wives in the world.

My third and laſt requeſt is, that you pray for me: I hope I can ſay, and I am ſure ſome of you have acknowledged, that I came at firſt among you, as the return and anſwer of your prayers: and indeed ſo it ſhould be, ſee Luke x. 2. I am perſuaded alſo, I have been carried on in my work by your prayers; it is ſweet when it is ſo; ſee Eph. vi. 18, 19. And I hope by your prayers to receive yet a farther benefit, even that which is mentioned, Heb. xiii. 18, 19. Philem. ver. 22. And truly it is but equal you ſhould pray for me, I have often prayed for you: let the pulpit, family, and cloſet witneſs for me; and God forbid I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you.

Yea, friends, your own intereſt may perſuade to it: what mercies you obtain for me, redound to your own advantage; if God preſerve me, it is for your uſe and ſervice: the more gifts and graces a miniſter hath, the better for them that ſhall wait on his miniſtry; the more God gives in to me, the more I ſhall be able to give out to you. I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this ſmall teſtification of my great love, and have recourſe to it, according as the exigencies of your condition ſhall require: read it conſideringly, and obediently; judge it not by the dreſs and ſtyle, but by the weight and ſavour of what you read. It is a good rule of Bernard, *In legendis libris, non quaeramus ſcientiam ſed ſaporem*, (*i. e.*) In reading books, regard not ſo much the ſcience, as the ſavour. That it may prove the ſavour of life unto life to you, and all thoſe into whoſe hands it ſhall come, is the hearty deſire of

Your loving, and faithful paſtor,

From my ſtudy at Ley in Slapton, *Oct.* 7. 1667.

JOHN FLAVEL.

A SAINT INDEED, &c.

PROV. iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.*

THE heart of man is his worst part before it be regenerate, and the best afterwards: it is the seat of principles, and fountain of actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be, principally fixed upon it.

The greatest difficulty in conversion, is, to win the heart to God; and the greatest difficulty after conversion, is to keep the heart with God. Here lies the very pinch and stress of religion; here is that which makes the way to life a narrow way, and the gate to heaven a strait gate. Direction and help in this great work, are the scope and sum of this text: wherein we have,

1. An exhortation, "Keep thy heart with all diligence."
2. The reason, or motive enforcing it, "For out of it are "the issues of life."

In the exhortation I shall consider,

1. The matter of the duty.
2. The manner of performing it.

1. The matter of the duty, *keep thy heart*. Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body which philosophers call the *primum vivens, et ultimum moriens*; the first that lives, and the last that dies; but by heart, in a metaphor, the scripture sometimes understands some particular noble faculty of the soul: in Rom. i. 21. it is put for the understanding part, their foolish heart, *(i. e.)* "their foolish under-"standing was darkened." And Psalm cxix. 11. it is put for the memory, "Thy word have I hid in my heart;" and 1 John iii. 10. it is put for the conscience, which hath in it both the light of the understanding and the recognitions of the memory: if our heart condemn us, *(i. e.)* if our conscience, whose proper office it is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole soul, or inner man; for look what the heart is to the body, that the soul is to the man; and what health is to the heart, that holiness is to the soul: *Quod*

sanitas in corpore id sanctitas in corde. The state of the whole body depends upon the soundness and vigour of the heart, and the everlasting state of the whole man upon the good or ill condition of the soul.

And by keeping the heart, understand the *diligent* and *constant* use and improvement of all holy means and duties, to preserve the soul from sin, and maintain its sweet and free communion with God. * Lavater, on the place, will have the word taken from a besieged garrison, begirt by many enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by treacherous citizens within, in which danger the soldiers, upon pain of death, are commanded to watch; and whereas the expression (*keep thy heart*) seems to put it upon us as our work, yet it doth not imply a sufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as able to stop the sun in its course, or make the rivers run backward, as by our own skill and power to rule and order our hearts: we may as well be our own *saviours*, as our own *keepers*; and yet Solomon speaks properly enough, when he saith, *keep thy heart*; because the duty is ours, though the power be God's. A natural man hath no power, a gracious man hath some, though not sufficient; and that power he hath, depends upon the exciting and assisting strength of Christ; *Gratia gratiam postulat*, grace within us is beholden to grace without us, John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do nothing." So much of the matter of the duty.

2. The manner of performing it is, *with all diligence*; the Hebrew is very emphatical, † *Cum omni custodia*, keep with all keeping, *q. d.* keep, keep; set double guards, your hearts will be gone else. And this vehemency of expression, with which the duty is urged, plainly implies how difficult it is to keep our hearts, and how dangerous to let them go.

3. The reason, or motive quickening to this duty, is very forcible and weighty: "For out of it are the issues of life." That is, it is the source and fountain of all vital actions and operations; *Hinc fons boni et peccandi origo*, saith Jerom; it is the spring and original both of good and evil, as the spring in

* I say constant, for the reason added in the text extends the duty to all the states and conditions of a Christian's life, and makes it bind *ad semper*: If the heart must be kept because out of it are the issues of life; then as long as these issues of life do flow out of it, we are obliged to keep it.

† נצר משמר

a watch that ſets all the wheels in motion. The heart is the treaſury, the hand and tongue but the ſhops, what is in theſe, comes from thence; the hand and tongue always begin where the heart ends. The heart contrives, and the members execute; Luke vi. 45. "A good man out of the good treaſure "of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out "of the evil treaſure of his heart bringeth forth evil things; "for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth ſpeaketh." So then, if the heart err in its work, theſe muſt needs miſcarry in theirs; for heart-errors are like the errors of the firſt concoction, which cannot be rectified afterwards: Or like the miſplacing and inverting of the ſtamps and letters in the preſs, which muſt needs cauſe ſo many errata in all the copies that are printed off. O then, how important a duty is that which is contained in the following propoſition?

Doct. *That the keeping, and right managing of the heart in every condition, is the great buſineſs of a Chriſtian's life.*

What the philoſopher ſaith of waters, is as properly applicable to hearts; *Suis terminis difficile continentur*, it is hard to keep them within any bounds: God hath ſet bounds and limits to them, yet how frequently do they tranſgreſs, not only the bounds of grace and religion, but even of reaſon and common honeſty? *Hic labor hoc opus eſt*; this is that which affords the Chriſtian matter of labour, fear and trembling to his dying-day. It is not the cleanſing of the hand that makes the Chriſtian, for many a hypocrite can ſhew as fair a hand as he; but the purifying, watching, and right ordering of the heart; this is the thing that provokes ſo many ſad complaints, and coſts ſo many deep groans and briniſh tears. It was the pride of Hezekiah's heart that made him lie in the duſt mourning before the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. It was the fear of hypocriſy invading the heart, that made David cry, "Let my heart be "found in thy ſtatutes, that I be not aſhamed," Pſalm cxix. 80. It was the ſad experience he had of the diviſions and diſtractions of his own heart, in the ſervice of God, that made him pour out that prayer, Pſalm lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart "to fear thy name."

The method in which I ſhall improve the point, ſhall be this,

Firſt, I ſhall enquire what the keeping of the heart ſuppoſes and imports.

Secondly, Aſſign divers reaſons, why Chriſtians muſt make this the great work and buſineſs of their lives.

Thirdly, Point at thoſe ſpecial ſeaſons which eſpecially call for this diligence in keeping the heart.

Fourthly, and *laſtly*, Apply the whole in ſeveral uſes.

1. What the keeping of the heart ſuppoſes and imports.

To keep the heart, neceſſarily ſuppoſes a previous work of ſanctification, which hath ſet the heart right, by giving it a new ſpiritual bent and inclination; for as long as the heart is not *ſet right* by grace, as to its habitual frame, no duties or means can *keep it right* with God. Self is the poiſe of the unſanctified heart, which biaſſes and moves it in all its deſigns and actions; and as long as it is ſo, it is impoſſible that any external means ſhould keep it with God.

Man, by creation, was of one conſtant, uniform frame and tenour of ſpirit, held one ſtraight and even courſe; not one thought or faculty revelled or diſordered; his mind had a perfect illumination to underſtand and know the will of God, his will a perfect compliance therewith; his ſenſitive appetite, and other inferior powers, ſtood in a moſt obedient ſubordination.

Man, by degeneration, is become a moſt diſordered and rebellious creature, conteſting with, and oppoſing his Maker, as the *firſt cauſe*, by ſelf-dependence; as the *chiefeſt good*, by ſelf-love; as the *higheſt Lord*, by ſelf-will, and as the *laſt end*, by ſelf-ſeeking; and ſo is quite diſordered, and all his acts irregular: His illuminated underſtanding is clouded with ignorance, his complying will full of rebellion and ſtubborneſs; his ſubordinate powers, caſting off the dominion and government of the ſuperior faculties.

But by regeneration this diſordered ſoul is ſet right again; ſanctification being the rectifying and due framing, or, as the ſcripture phraſes it, the renovation of the ſoul after the image of God, Eph. iv. 24. in which, *ſelf-dependence* is removed by faith; *ſelf-love*, by the love of God; *ſelf-will*, by ſubjection and obedience to the will of God; and *ſelf-ſeeking* by ſelf-denial. The darkened underſtanding is again illuminated, Eph. i. 18. the refractory will ſweetly ſubdued, Pſalm cx. 3. the rebellious appetite, or concupiſcence gradually conquered, Rom. vi. 7. *per tot.* And thus the ſoul which ſin had univerſally depraved is again by grace reſtored and rectified.

This being pre-ſuppoſed, it will not be difficult to apprehend, what it is to keep the heart, which is nothing elſe but the *conſtant care and diligence of ſuch a renewed man, to preſerve his ſoul in that holy frame to which grace hath reduced it, and daily ſtrives to hold it.*

For, though grace hath, in a great measure, rectified the soul, and given it an habitual and heavenly temper; yet sin often actually discomposes it again: so that even a gracious heart is like a musical instrument, which, though it be never so exactly tuned, a small matter brings it out of tune again; yea, hang it aside but a little, and it will need setting again, before you can play another lesson on it; even so stands the case with gracious hearts; if they are in frame in one duty, yet how dull, dead, and disordered when they come to another? And therefore every duty needs a particular preparation of the heart, Job xi. 13. "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine "hands towards him." Well then, to keep the heart, is carefully to preserve it from sin, which disorders it; and maintain that spiritual and gracious frame, which fits it for a life of communion with God. And this includes these six acts in it:

1. Frequent observation of the frame of the heart, turning in and examining how the case stands with it, this is one part of the work. Carnal and formal persons take no heed to this, they cannot be brought to confer with their own hearts; there are some men and women that have lived forty or fifty years in the world, and have scarce had one hour's discourse with their own hearts all that while: It is a hard thing to bring a man and himself together upon such an account; but saints know those soliloquies and self-conferences to be of excellent use and advantage. The heathen could say, *anima sedendo et quiescendo fit sapiens*, the soul is made wise by sitting still in quietness; though bankrupts care not to look into their books of accompt, yet upright hearts will know whether they go backward or forward, Psalm lxxvii. 6. "I commune with mine own "heart." The heart can never be kept, until its case be examined and understood.

2. It includes deep humiliation for heart-evils and disorders; thus Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. Thus the people were ordered to spread forth their hands to God in prayer, in a sense of the plague of their own hearts, 1 Kings viii. 38. Upon this account many an upright heart hath been laid low before God: O what an heart have I? They have in their confessions pointed at the heart, the pained place; Lord, here is the wound, here is the plague-sore. It is with the heart well kept, as it is with the eye, which is a fit emblem of it, if a small dust get into the eye, it will never leave twinkling and watering till it have wept it out: So the upright heart cannot be at rest till it have wept out its troubles, and poured out its complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earneſt ſupplications and inſtant prayer for heart-purifying and rectifying grace, when ſin hath defiled and diſordered it; ſo Pſalm xix. 12. "Cleanſe thou me from ſecret "faults;" and Pſalm lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy "name." Saints have always many ſuch petitions depending before the throne of God's grace; this is the thing which is moſt pleaded by them with God: When they are praying for outward mercies, haply their ſpirits may be more remiſs, but when it comes to the heart-caſe, then they extend their ſpirits to the utmoſt, fill their mouths with arguments, weep and make ſupplication: Oh, for a better heart! Oh for a heart to love God more! To hate ſin more, to walk more evenly with God! Lord, deny not to me ſuch a heart, whatever thou deny me; give me an heart to fear thee, love and delight in thee, if I beg my bread in deſolate places. It is obſerved of holy Mr. Bradford, that when he was confeſſing ſin, he would never give over confeſſing until he had felt ſome brokenneſs of heart for that ſin; and when praying for any ſpiritual mercy, would never give over that ſuit, until he had got ſome relish of that mercy; that is the third thing included in keeping the heart.

4. It includes the impoſing of ſtrong engagements and bonds upon ourſelves to walk more accurately with God, and avoid the occaſions whereby the heart may be induced to ſin: Well-compoſed, adviſed, and deliberate vows, are, in ſome caſes, of excellent uſe to guard the heart againſt ſome ſpecial ſin; ſo Job xxxi. 1. "I made a covenant with mine eyes;" by this means, holy ones have over-awed their ſouls, and preſerved themſelves from defilement by ſome ſpecial heart-corruptions.

5. It includes a conſtant holy jealouſy over our own hearts; quick-ſighted ſelf-jealouſy is an excellent preſervative from ſin; he that will keep his heart, muſt have the eyes of his ſoul awake and open upon all the diſorderly and tumultuous ſtirrings of his affections; if the affections break looſe, and the paſſions be ſtirred, the ſoul muſt diſcover and ſuppreſs them before they get to an height: O, my ſoul, doſt thou well in this? My tumultuous thoughts and paſſions, where is your commiſſion?

State viri, quae cauſa viae? quive eſtis in armis. Virg.

Happy is the man that thus feareth always, Prov. xxviii. 14. By this fear of the Lord it is that men depart from evil, ſhake of ſecurity, and preſerve themſelves from iniquity; he that will keep his heart muſt feed with fear, rejoice with fear, and paſs the whole time of his ſojourning here in fear, and all little enough to keep the heart from ſin.

6. And, laſtly, To add no more, it includes the realiſing of

God's preſence with us, and ſetting the Lord always before us: This the people of God have found a ſingular means to keep their hearts upright, and awe them from ſin; when the eye of our faith is fixed upon the eye of God's omniſcience, we dare not let out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy Job durſt not ſuffer his heart to yield to an impure, vain thought; and what was it that moved him to ſo great a circumſpection? Why, he tells you, Job xxxi. 4. "Doth he not ſee my ways, "and count all my ſteps? Walk before me (ſaith God to "Abraham) and be thou perfect," Gen. xvii. 1. Even as parents uſe to ſet their children in the congregation before them, knowing that elſe they will be toying and playing; ſo would the heart of the beſt man too, were it not for the eye of God.

In theſe, and ſuch like particulars, do gracious ſouls expreſs the care they have of their hearts; they are as careful to prevent the breaking looſe of their corruptions in times of temptation, as ſeamen are to bind faſt the guns, that they break not looſe in a ſtorm; as careful to preſerve the ſweetneſs and comfort they have got from God in any duty, as one that comes out of an hot bath, or great ſweat, is of taking cold, by going forth into the chill air. This is the work, and of all works in religion it is the moſt difficult, conſtant, and important work.

1. It is the hardeſt work; heart-work is hard work indeed. To ſhuffle over religious duties with a looſe and heedleſs ſpirit, will coſt no great pains; but to ſet thyſelf before the Lord, and tye up thy looſe and vain thoughts to a conſtant and ſerious attendance upon him; this will coſt thee ſomething: To attain a facility and dexterity of language in prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expreſſions, is eaſy; but to get thy heart broken for ſin, whilſt thou art confeſſing it; melted with free grace, whilſt thou art bleſſing God for it; to be really aſhamed and humbled through the apprehenſions of God's infinite holineſs, and to keep thy heart in this frame, not only in, but after duty, will ſurely coſt thee ſome groans and travailing pains of ſoul: To repreſs the outward acts of ſin, and compoſe the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner, is no great matter; even carnal perſons by the force of common principles can do this; but to kill the root of corruption within, to ſet and keep up an holy government over thy thoughts, to have all things lie ſtraight and orderly in the heart, this is not eaſy.

2. It is a conſtant work. The keeping of the heart is ſuch a work, as is never done till life be done; this labour and our

life, end together: It is with a Chriſtian in this buſineſs, as it is with ſeamen that have ſprung a leak at ſea, if they tug not conſtantly at the pump, the water increaſes upon them, and will quickly ſink them. It is in vain for them to ſay the work is hard, and we are weary; there is no time or condition in the life of a Chriſtian, which will ſuffer an intermiſſion of this work. It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up of Moſes his hands, whilſt Iſrael and Amalek were fighting below, Exod. xvii. 12. No ſooner do Moſes his hands grow heavy and ſink down, but Amalek prevails. You know it coſt David and Peter many a ſad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

3. It is the moſt important buſineſs of a Chriſtian's life. Without this we are but formaliſts in religion; all our profeſſions, gifts and duties ſignify nothing: "My ſon, give me "thine heart," Prov. xxiii. 36. God is pleaſed to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt; he will put this honour upon the creature to receive it from him in the way of a gift; but if this be not given him, he regards not whatever elſe you bring to him: There is ſo much only of worth and value in what we do, as there is of heart in it. Concerning the heart, God ſeems to ſay, as Joſeph of Benjamin, "If you bring not Benjamin with "you, you ſhall not ſee my face." Among the heathens, when the beaſt was cut up for ſacrifice, the firſt thing the *prieſt* looked upon was the heart, and if that was unſound and naught, the ſacrifice was rejected. God rejects all duties (how glorious ſoever in other reſpects) offered him without a heart. He that performs duty without a heart, *viz.* heedleſly, is no more accepted with God, than he that performs it with a double heart, *viz.* hypocritically, Iſa. lxvi. 3. And thus I have briefly opened the nature of the duty, what is imported in this phraſe, "Keep thy heart."

2. Next, I ſhall give you ſome rational account why Chriſtians ſhould make this the great buſineſs of their lives, to keep their hearts.

The importance and neceſſity of making this our great and main buſineſs, will manifeſtly appear in that, 1. The honour of God; 2. The ſincerity of our profeſſion; 3. The beauty of our converſation; 4. The comfort of our ſouls; 5. The improvement of our graces; and, 6. Our ſtability in the hour of temptation; are all wrapt up in, and dependent on our ſincerity and care in the management of this work.

1. The glory of God is much concerned therein; heart-evils are very provoking evils to the Lord. The ſchools do well ob-

ſerve, that outward ſins are *majoris infamiæ*, ſins of great infamy; but heart-ſins are *majoris reatus*, ſins of deeper guilt. How ſeverely hath the great God declared his wrath from heaven againſt heart-wickedneſs; the great crime for which the old world ſtands indicted, Gen. vi. 5, 6, 7. is heart-wickedneſs: "God ſaw that every imagination, (or fiction) of their heart "was only evil, and that continually;" for which he ſent the dreadfulleſt judgment that was ever executed ſince the world began: "And the Lord ſaid, I will deſtroy man whom I have "created from the face of the earth, both man and beaſt, and "the creeping things, and the fowls of heaven, for it repent-"eth me that I have made man," verſe 7. We find not their murders, adulteries, blaſphemies, (tho' they were defiled with theſe) particularly alledged againſt them; but the evils of their hearts: Yea, that which God was ſo provoked by, as to give up his peculiar inheritance into the enemy's hand, was the evil of their hearts, Jer. iv. 14. "O Jeruſalem, waſh thine heart from "wickedneſs, that thou mayeſt be ſaved; how long ſhall vain "thoughts lodge within thee?" The wickedneſs and vanity of their thoughts God took ſpecial notice of; and becauſe of this the Chaldean muſt come upon them as a *lion from his thicket*, verſe 7. *and tear them to pieces*. For the very ſin of thoughts it was that God threw down the fallen angels from heaven, and keeps them ſtill in everlaſting chains to the judgment of the great day; by which expreſſion is not obſcurely intimated ſome extraordinary judgment to which they are reſerved, as priſoners that have moſt irons laid upon them, may be ſuppoſed to be the greateſt malefactors: And what was their ſin? Why only ſpiritual wickedneſs? For they having no bodily organs, could act nothing externally againſt God. Yea, mere heart-evils are ſo provoking, that for them he rejects with indignation all the duties that ſome men perform unto him, Iſa. lxvi. 3. "He that killeth an ox, is as if he ſlew a man; he that ſacri-"ficeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth "an oblation, as if he offered ſwines blood; he that burneth "incenſe, as if he bleſſed an idol." In what words could the abhorrence of a creature's actions be more fully expreſſed by the holy God? Murder and idolatry are not more vile in his account, than their ſacrifices, though materially ſuch as himſelf appointed: And what made them ſo? The following words inform us, "their ſoul delighteth in their abominations."

To conclude, ſuch is the vileneſs of mere heart-ſins, that the ſcriptures ſometimes intimate the difficulty of pardon for

them. So in the case of Simon Magus, Acts viii. 21. his heart was not right; he had vile thoughts of God, and the things of God; the apostle bids him "repent and pray, if "perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him." O then, never slight heart-evils! for by these God is highly wronged and provoked; and for this reason let every Christian make it his work to keep his heart with all diligence.

2. The sincerity of our profession much depends upon the care and conscience we have in keeping our hearts; for it is most certain, that a man is but an hypocrite in his profession, how curious soever he be in the externals of religion, that is heedless and careless of the frame of his heart: You have a pregnant instance of this in the case of Jehu, 2 Kings x. 31. "But "Jehu took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord God of "Israel with his heart." That content gives us an account of the great service performed by Jehu against the house of Ahab and Baal, as also of a great temporal reward given him by God for that service, even that his children, to the fourth generation, should sit upon the throne of Israel. And yet, in these words, Jehu is censured for an hypocrite; though God approved, and rewarded the work, yet he abhorred and rejected the person that did it as hypocritical: And wherein lay his hypocrisy? but in this, that he took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord with his heart, (*i. e.*) he did all insincerely, and for self-ends; and though the work he did was materially good, yet he not purging his heart from those unworthy self-designs in doing it, was an hypocrite: And Simon, of whom we spake before, though he appeared such a person, that the apostle could not regularly refuse him; yet his hypocrisy was quickly discovered: And what discovered it but this, that though he professed and associated himself with the saints, yet he was a stranger to the mortification of heart-sins? "Thy heart is not right with God," Acts viii. 21. It is true, there is a great difference among Christians themselves, in their diligence and dexterity about heart-work; some are more conversant and successful in it than others are; but he that takes no heed to his heart, that is not careful to order it aright before God, is but a hypocrite, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. "And they come unto thee as the people com-"eth, and sit before thee (as my people) and they hear thy "words, but they will not do them; for with their mouths "they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their cover-"ousness." Here were a company of formal hypocrites, as is evident by that expression (*as my people*) like them, but not of

them. And what made them ſo? Their outſide was fair; here were reverend poſtures, high profeſſions, much ſeeming joy and delight in ordinances, "Thou art to them as a lovely ſong;" yea, but for all that they kept not their hearts with God in thoſe duties, their hearts were commanded by their luſts, they went after their covetouſneſs; had they kept their hearts with God, all had been well; but not regarding which way their hearts went in duty, there lay the core of their hypocriſy.

Objection. If any upright ſoul ſhould hence infer, then I am an hypocrite too, for many times my heart departs from God in duty; do what I can, yet I cannot hold it cloſe with God.

Solution. To this I anſwer, The very objection carries in it its own ſolution. Thou ſayeſt, do what I can, yet I cannot keep my heart with God. Soul, if thou doſt what thou canſt, thou haſt the bleſſing of an upright, though God ſees good to exerciſe thee under the affliction of a diſcompoſed heart. Their remains ſtill ſome wildneſs in the thoughts and fancies of the beſt to humble them; but if you find a care before to prevent them, and oppoſition againſt them when they come, grief and ſorrow afterwards; you will find enough to clear you from reigning hypocriſy.

(1.) This fore-care is ſeen partly in laying up the word in thine heart to prevent them, Pſal. cxix. 11. "Thy word have "I hid in mine heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee:" partly in our endeavours to engage our hearts to God, Jer. xxx. 21. and partly in begging preventing grace from God in our onſets upon duty, Pſal. cxix. 36, 37. it is a good ſign where this care goes before a duty.

And, (2.) It is a ſweet ſign of uprightneſs to oppoſe them in their firſt riſe, Pſal. cxix. 113. "I hate vain thoughts," Gal. v. 17. "The ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh."

And, (3.) Thy after-grief diſcovers thy upright heart. If, with Hezekiah, thou art humbled for the evils of thy heart, thou haſt no reaſon, from thoſe diſorders, to queſtion the integrity of it; but to ſuffer ſin to lodge quietly in the heart, to let thy heart habitually and uncontrolledly wander from God, is a ſad, and dangerous ſymptom indeed.

3. The beauty of our converſation ariſes from the heavenly frame, and holy order of our ſpirits; there is a ſpiritual luſtre and beauty in the converſation of ſaints; "The righteous is "more excellent than his neighbour," they ſhine as the lights of the world; but whatever luſtre and beauty is in their lives, comes from the excellency of their ſpirits; as the candle within puts a luſtre upon the lanthorn in which it ſhines. It is im-

poſſible that a diſordered and neglected heart ſhould ever produce well-ordered converſation; and ſince (as the text obſerves) the iſſues or ſtreams of life flow out of the heart as their fountain, it muſt needs follow, that ſuch as the heart is, the life will be; hence 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12. "Abſtain from fleſhly luſts,---having "your converſation honeſt," * or *beautiful*, as the Greek word imports. So Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the "unrighteous man his thoughts." His way notes the courſe of his life, his thoughts the frame of his heart; and therefore ſince the way and courſe of his life flows from his thoughts, or the frame of his heart, both or neither will be forſaken: the heart is the womb of all actions, theſe actions are virtually and ſeminally contained in our thoughts, theſe thoughts being once made up into affections, are quickly made out into ſuitable actions and practices. If the heart be wicked, then, as Chriſt ſaith, Matth. xv. 19. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, mur-"ders, adulteries," *&c.* Mark the order; firſt wanton, or revengeful thoughts, then unclean, or murderous practices.

And if the heart be holy and ſpiritual, then, as David ſpeaks, from ſweet experience, Pſal. xlv. 1. "My heart is (inditing) "a good matter, I ſpeak of things which (I have made), my "tongue is as the pen of a ready writer." Here is a life richly beautified with good works, ſome ready made; "I will ſpeak "of the things which I have made:" others upon the wheel making, my heart is inditing, but both proceeding from the heavenly frame of his heart.

Put but the heart in frame, and the life will quickly diſcover that it is ſo. I think it is not very difficult to diſcern, by the duties and converſes of Chriſtians, what frames their ſpirits are under; take a Chriſtian in a good frame, and how ſerious, heavenly, and profitable, will his converſes and duties be! what a lovely companion is he during the continuance of it! It would do any one's heart good to be with him at ſuch a time, Pſal. xxxvii. 30, 31. "The mouth of the righteous ſpeaketh wiſ-"dom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the law of his "God is in his heart."

When the heart is up with God, and full of God, how dexterouſly and ingeniouſly will he wind in ſpiritual diſcourſe, improving every occaſion and advantage to ſome heavenly purpoſe? Few words run then at the waſte ſpout.

And what elſe can be the reaſon why the diſcourſes and du-

* Κάλλη.

ties of many Christians are become so frothy, and unprofitable, their communion both with God, and one another, become as a dry stalk, but because their hearts are neglected? Surely this must be the reason of it, and verily it is an evil greatly to be bewailed; for want of this Christian-fellowship, it is become a sapless thing; so the attracting beauty that was wont to shine from the conversations of the saints upon the faces and consciences of the world, (which if it did not allure, and bring them in love with the ways of God; yet at the least left a testimony in their consciences of the excellency of those men and their ways) this is in a great measure lost, to the unspeakable detriment of religion.

Time was, when Christians did carry it at such a rate, that the world stood at a gaze at them, as the word ξενίζονται, 1 Pet. iv. 4. imports. Their life and language were of a different strain from others, their tongues discovered them to be Galileans, where-ever they came; but now, since vain speculations, and fruitless controversies have so much obtained, and heart-work, practical godliness, so much neglected among professors, the case is sadly altered; their discourse is become like other men's: if they come among you now, they may (to allude to that, Acts ii. 6.) "hear every man speak in his own "language." And truly I have little hope to see this evil redressed, and the credit of religion again repaired, till Christians fall to their old work; till they ply heart-work closer: when the salt of heavenly-mindedness is cast into the spring, the streams will run clearer, and sweeter.

4. The comfort of our souls doth much depend upon the keeping of our hearts; for he that is negligent in attending his own heart, is (ordinarily) a great stranger to assurance, and the sweet comforts flowing from it.

Indeed, if the Antinomian doctrine were true, which teacheth you to reject all marks and signs for the trial of your conditions, telling you it is only the Spirit that Immediately assures you, by witnessing your adoption directly without them, then you might be careless of your hearts, yea, strangers to them, and yet no strangers to comfort: but since both scripture and experience do confute this dotage, I hope you will never look for comfort in that unscriptural way. I deny not but it is the work and office of the Spirit, to assure you, and yet do confidently affirm, that if ever you attain assurance, in the ordinary way wherein God dispenses it, you must take pains with your own hearts; you may expect your comforts upon easier terms, but I am mistaken if ever you enjoy them upon

any other: "Give all diligence, prove yourselves;" this is the scripture way. I remember Mr Roberts, in his Treatise of the covenant, tells us, that he knew a Christian, who, in the infancy of his Christianity, so vehemently panted after the infallible assurance of God's love, that for a long time together he earnestly desired some voice from heaven, yea, sometimes walking in the solitary fields, earnestly desired some miraculous voice from the trees and stones there: this, after many desires and longings, was denied him; but in time a better was afforded in the ordinary way of searching the word, and his own heart. An instance of the like nature the learned Gerson gives us of one that was driven by temptation upon the very borders of desperation; at last being sweetly settled, and assured, one asked him how he attained it? He answered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione, &c.* Not by any extraordinary revelation, but by subjecting his understanding to the scriptures, and comparing his own heart with them. The Spirit, indeed, assures by witnessing our adoption; and he witnesseth two ways.

(1.) Objectively, (*i. e.*) by working those graces in our souls which are the conditions of the promise, and so the Spirit and his graces in us, are all one: the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be discerned in his essence, but in his operations; and to discern these, is to discern the Spirit; and how these should be discerned, without serious searching, and diligent watching of the heart, I cannot imagine.

(2.) The other way of the Spirit's witnessing is effectively, (*i. e.*) by irradiating the soul with a grace-discovering light, shining upon his own work; and this in order of nature follows the former work; he first infuses the grace, and then opens the eye of the soul to see it. Now since the heart is the subject of that infused grace, even this way of the Spirit's witnessing also includes the necessity of keeping carefully our own hearts: For,

(1.) A neglected heart is so confused and dark, that the little grace which is in it, is not ordinarily discernable: the most accurate and laborious Christians, that take most pains, and spend most time about their hearts, do yet find it very difficult to discover the pure and genuine workings of the Spirit there: how then shall the Christian who is (comparatively) negligent and remiss about heart-work, be ever able to discover it? Sincerity, which is the *quaesitum*, the thing sought for, lies in the heart like a small piece of gold in the bottom of a river, he that will find it, must stay till the water is clear, and

ſettled, and then he ſhall ſee it ſparkling at the bottom. And that the heart may be clear, and ſettled, how much pains and watching, care and diligence, will it coſt?

(2.) God doth not uſually indulge lazy and negligent ſouls with the comforts of aſſurance; he will not ſo much as ſeem to patronize ſloth and careleſſneſs; he will give it, but it ſhall be in his own way: his command hath united our care and comfort together; they are miſtaken that think the beautiful child of aſſurance may be born without pangs: ah, how many ſolitary hours have the people of God ſpent in heart-examination! how many times have they looked into the word, and then into their hearts? Sometimes they thought they diſcovered ſincerity, and were even ready to draw forth the triumphant concluſion of aſſurance; then comes a doubt they cannot reſolve, and daſhes all again: many hopes and fears, doubtings and reaſonings, they have had in their own breaſts, before they arrived at a comfortable ſettlement.

To conclude, ſuppoſe it poſſible for a careleſs Chriſtian to attain aſſurance, yet it is impoſſible he ſhould long retain it; for as for thoſe whoſe hearts are filled with the joys of aſſurance; if extraordinary care be not uſed, it is a thouſand to one if ever they long enjoy it: for a little pride, vanity, careleſſneſs, will daſh to pieces all that for which they have been labouring a long time, in many a weary duty. Since, then, the joy of our life, the comfort of our ſouls, riſes and falls with our diligence in this work, keep your hearts with all diligence.

5. The improvement of our graces depends upon the keeping our hearts; I never knew grace thrive in a negligent and careleſs ſoul: the habits and roots of grace are planted in the heart; and the deeper they are radicated there, the more thriving and flouriſhing grace is. In Eph. iii. 17. we read of "being rooted in grace;" grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, Pſal. cxvi. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 13. It is true, Chriſt is the root of a Chriſtian; but Chriſt is *origo originans*, the originating root; and grace, *origo originata*, a root originated, planted, and influenced by Chriſt; according as this thrives under divine influences, ſo the acts of grace are more or leſs fruitful, or vigorous. Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, theſe fructifying influences are ſtopt and cut off, multitudes of vanities break in upon it, and devour its ſtrength; the heart is, as it were, the paſture, in which multitudes of thoughts are fed every day; a gracious heart diligently kept, feeds many precious thoughts of God in a day, Pſal. cxxxix. 17. "How precious are

" thy thoughts to me, O God! how great is the ſum of them? If " I ſhould count them, they are more in number than the " ſand; and when I awake, I am ſtill with thee." And as the gracious heart feeds and nouriſhes them, ſo they refreſh and feaſt the heart, Pſal. lxiii. 5, 6. " My ſoul is filled as with mar- " row and fatneſs whilſt I think upon thee," *&c.* But in the diſregarded heart, ſwarms of vain and fooliſh thoughts are perpetually working, and juſtle out thoſe ſpiritual ideas, and thoughts of God, by which the ſoul ſhould be refreſhed.

Beſides, the careleſs heart makes nothing out of any duty or ordinance it performs or attends on, and yet theſe are the conduits of heaven, from whence grace is watered, and made fruitful: a man may go with an heedleſs ſpirit from ordinance to ordinance, abide all his days under the choiceſt teaching, and yet never be improved by them; for heart-neglect is a leak in the bottom, no heavenly influences, how rich ſoever, abide in that ſoul, Mat. xiii. 3, 4. The heart that lies open and common, like the high-way, free for all paſſengers; when the ſeed fell on it, the fowls came and devoured it. Alas! it is not enough to hear, unleſs we take heed how we hear; a man may pray, and never be the better, unleſs he watch unto prayer. In a word, all ordinances, means, and duties, are bleſſed unto the improvement of grace, according to the care and ſtrictneſs we uſe in keeping our hearts in them.

6. *Laſtly*, The ſtability of our ſouls in the hour of temptation, will be much, according to the care and conſcience we have of keeping our hearts; the careleſs heart is an eaſy prey to Satan in the hour of temptation, his main batteries are raiſed againſt that fort-royal, the heart; if he wins that, he wins all; for it commands the whole man: and, alas! how eaſy a conqueſt is a neglected heart? It is no more difficult to ſurprize it, than for an enemy to enter that city whoſe gates are open, and unguarded: it is the watchful heart that diſcovers and ſuppreſſes the temptation before it comes to its ſtrength. Divines obſerve this to be the method in which temptations are ripened, and brought to their full ſtrength.

There is, (1.) The irritation of the object, or that power it hath to work upon, and provoke our corrupt nature; which is either done by the real preſence of the object, or elſe by ſpeculation, when the object (though abſent) is held out by the phantaſy before the ſoul: *Objectum.*

(2.) Then follows the motion of the ſenſitive appetite, which is ſtirred and provoked by *Objectum.*

the phantasy, representing it as a sensual good;
Βουλευ. as having profit or pleasure in it.

(3.) Then there is a consultation in the mind
Αγωνι. about it, deliberating about the likeliest means of accomplishing it.

Βουλησι. (4.) Next follows the election, or choice of the will.

(5.) And, lastly, The desire, or full engagement of the will to it; all this may be done in a few moments, for the debates of the soul are quick, and soon ended: when it comes thus far, then the heart is won, Satan hath entered victoriously, and displayed his colours upon the walls of that royal fort; but had the heart been well guarded at first, it had never come to this height; the temptation had been stopped in the first or second act. And indeed there it is stopped easily: for it is in the motions of a tempted soul to sin, as in the motion of stone falling from the brow of a hill; it is easily stopped at first, but whene once it is set a-going, *Vires acquirit eundo*: And therefore it is the greatest wisdom in the world to observe the first motions of the heart, to check and stop sin there. The motions of sin are weakest at first, a little care and watchfulness may prevent much mischief now, which the careless heart not heeding, is brought within the power of temptation; as the Syrians were brought blindfold into the midst of Samaria, before they knew where they were.

By this time, reader, I hope thou art fully satisfied how consequential and necessary a work the keeping of the heart is, it being a duty that wraps up so many dear interests of the soul in it.

3. Next, according to the method propounded, I proceed to point out those special seasons in the life of a Christian, which require and call for our utmost diligence in keeping the heart: for though (as was observed before) the duty binds *ad semper*, and there is no time or condition of life in which we may be excused from this work; yet there are some signal seasons, critical hours, requiring more than a common vigilance over the heart.

And the first,

1. *Season.* 'Is the time of prosperity, when providence smiles 'upon us, and dandles us upon its knee. Now, Christian, keep 'thy heart with all diligence; for now it will be exceeding apt 'to grow secure, proud, and earthly, *Rara virtus est humilitas 'honorata*, (saith Bernard) to see a man humble under prospe-

'rity, is one of the greatest rarities in the world. Even a good 'Hezekiah could not hide a vain-glorious temper under his 'temptation, and hence that caution to Israel, Deut. vi. 10, '11, 12. "And it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have 'brought thee into the land which he sware to thy fathers, to 'Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give thee great and goodly ci-'ties which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good 'things which thou filledst not, *&c.* Then beware lest thou 'forget the Lord:" and indeed so it fell out, "for Jesurun 'waxed fat, and kicked," Deut. xxxii. 15.

Now, then, the first case will be this, *viz.*

Case 1. *How a Christian may keep his heart from pride, and carnal security, under the smiles of providence, and confluence of creature-comforts.*

There are seven choice helps to secure the heart from the dangerous snares of prosperity; the first is this,

1. *To consider the dangerous ensnaring temptations attending a pleasant and prosperous condition; few, yea, very few of those that live in the pleasures and prosperity of this world, escape everlasting perdition*, Matth. xix. 24. "It is easier (saith "Christ) for a camel to pass thro' the eye of a needle, than for "a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and 1 Cor. i. 26. "Not many mighty, not many noble are called." It might justly make us tremble when the scripture tells us in general, that few shall be saved; much more when it tells us, that of that rank and sort of which we are speaking, but few shall be saved. When Joshua called all the tribes of Israel to lot upon them for the discovery of Achan, doubtless Achan feared; when the tribe of Judah was taken, his fear increased; but when the family of the Zarhites was taken, it was time then to tremble. So when the scripture comes so near as to tell us that of such a sort of men very few shall escape, it is time to look about; *Miror si potest servari aliquis rectorum*, saith Chrysostom; I should wonder if any of the *rulers* be saved. O how many have been coached to hell in the chariots of earthly pleasures, while others have been whipped to heaven by the rod of affliction! how few, like the daughter of Tyre, come to Christ with a gift! how few among the rich intreat his favour!

2. *It may keep us yet more humble and watchful in prosperity, if we consider, that among Christians many have been much the worse for it.* How good had it been for some of them, if they had never known prosperity! When they were in a low condition, how humble, spiritual, and heavenly, were they! but

when advanced, what an apparent alteration hath been upon their ſpirits? It was ſo with Iſrael, when they were in a low condition in the wilderneſs; then Iſrael was *holineſs to the Lord*, Jer. ii. 23. but when they came into Canaan, and were fed in a fat paſture, then, "we are lords, we will come "no more unto thee," ver. 31. Outward gains are ordinarily attended with inward loſſes; as in a low condition their civil employments were wont to have a tang and ſavour of their duties, ſo in an exalted condition their duties commonly have a tang of the world. He, indeed, is rich in grace, whoſe graces are not hindered by his riches; there are but few Jehoſaphats in the world, of whom it is ſaid, 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6. "He had "ſilver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted up in "the way of God's commands:" Will not this keep thy heart humble in proſperity, to think how dear many godly men have paid for their riches, that through them they have loſt that which all the world cannot purchaſe? Then, in the next place,

3. Keep down thy vain heart by this conſideration, *that God values no man a jot the more for theſe things.* God values no man by outward excellencies, but by inward graces: they are the internal ornaments of the Spirit, which are of great price in God's eyes, 1 Pet. iii. 4. He deſpiſes all worldly glory, and accepts no man's perſon; "but in every nation, he that "feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him," Acts x. 35. Indeed, if the judgment of God went by the ſame rule that man's doth, we might value ourſelves by theſe things, and ſtand upon them: But as one ſaid (when dying) I ſhall not appear before God as a doctor, but as a man; *tantus quiſque eſt, quantus eſt apud Deum.* So much every man is, and no more, as he is in the judgment of God. Doth thy heart yet ſwell? And will neither of the former conſiderations keep it humble?

4. Then, *fourthly*, Conſider, *how bitterly many perſons have bewailed their folly when they came to die, that ever they ſet their hearts upon theſe things, and heartily wiſhed that they had never known them.* What a ſad ſtory was that of Pius Quintus, who dying, cried out deſparingly, when I was in a low condition, I had ſome hopes of ſalvation; but when I was advanced to be a Cardinal, I greatly doubted it; but ſince I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Mr. Spencer alſo tells us a real, but ſad ſtory, of a rich oppreſſor, who had ſcraped up a great eſtate for his only ſon; when he came to die, he called his ſon to him, and ſaid, ſon, do you indeed love me? The ſon anſwered, that nature beſides his paternal in-

dulgence, obliged him to that. Then, said the father, express it by this; hold thy finger in the candle as long as I am saying a *pater noster*: The son attempted, but could not endure it. Upon that, the father broke out into these expressions, thou canst not suffer the burning of thy finger for me, but to get this wealth, I have hazarded my soul for thee, and must burn body and soul in hell for thy sake: Thy pain would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable fire.

5. The heart may be kept humble, by considering *of what a clogging nature earthly things are to a soul heartily engaged in the way to heaven*; they shut out much of heaven from us at present, though they may not shut us out of heaven at last. If thou consider thyself under the notion of a stranger in this world, travelling for heaven, and seeking a better country, thou hast then as much reason to be taken, and delighted with these things, as a weary horse hath with a heavy clog-bag: There was a serious truth in that atheistical scoff of Julian, when he took away the Christians estates, and told them, it was to make them fitter for the kingdom of heaven.

6. Is thy spirit, for all this, flatulent and lofty? Then urge upon it *the consideration of that awful day of reckoning, wherein, according to our receipts of mercies, shall be our accompts for them*: And methinks this should awe, and humble the vainest heart that ever was in the breast of a saint. Know for certain, that the Lord records all the mercies that ever he gave thee, from the beginning to the end of thy life. Mic. vi. 5. "Remember, O my people, from Shittim unto Gilgal," *&c.* yea, they are exactly numbered, and recorded in order to an account; and thy account will be suitable. Luke xii. 48. "To "whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required." You are but stewards, and your Lord will come to take an account of you; and what a great account have you to make, who have much of this world in your hand? What swift witnesses will your mercies be against you, if this be the best fruits of them?

7. It is a very humbling consideration, *that the mercies of God should work otherwise upon my spirit, than they use to do upon the spirits of others, to whom they come as sanctified mercies from the love of God.* Ah Lord! what a sad consideration is this! enough to lay me in the dust; when I consider,

(1.) That their mercies have greatly humbled them; the higher God has raised them, the lower they have laid themselves before God. Thus did Jacob, when God had given him much substance. Gen. xxxii. 10. "And Jacob said, I am not worthy

" of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which " thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed " over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands." And thus it was with holy David, 2 Sam. vii. 18. When God had confirmed the promise to him, to build him a house, and not reject him as he did Saul, he goes in before the Lord, and saith, " Who am I? and what is my father's house, that thou " hast brought me hitherto?" And so indeed God required, Deut. xxvi. 5. when Israel was to bring to God the first-fruits of Canaan, they were to say, " A Syrian ready to perish was " my father," &c. Do others raise God the higher for the raising them? And the more God raises me, the more shall I abuse him, and exalt myself? O what a sad thing is this!

(2.) Others have freely ascribed the glory of all their enjoyments to God, and magnified not themselves, but him, for their mercies: So David, 2 Sam. vii. 26. " Let thy name be magnified, and the house of thy servant be established." He doth not fly upon the mercy, and suck out the sweetness of it, looking no farther than his own comfort; no, he cares for no mercy except God be magnified in it. So Psalm xviii. 2. when God had delivered him from all his enemies, " The " Lord (saith he) is my strength, and my rock, he is become " my salvation." They did not put the crown upon their own heads, as I do.

(3.) The mercies of God have been melting mercies unto others, melting their souls in love to the God of their mercies. So Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1. when she received the mercy of a son, " My soul (saith she) rejoiceth in the Lord;" not in the mercy, but in the God of the mercy. And so Mary, Luke i. 46. " My " soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit rejoiceth in God my " Saviour." The word signifies to make more room for God; their hearts were not contracted, but the more enlarged to God.

(4.) The mercies of God have been mighty restraints to keep others from sin. So Ezra ix. 13. " Seeing thou, our God, hast " given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break " thy commandments?" Ingenuous souls have felt the force of the obligations of love and mercy upon them.

(5.) To conclude, The mercies of God to others have been as oil to the wheels of their obedience, and make them fitter for services, 2 Chron. xvii. 5. Now if mercies work contrarily upon my heart, what cause have I to be afraid that they come not to me in love? I tell you, this is enough to damp the spirit of any saint, to see what sweet effects they have had on others, and what sad effects on him.

2. *Season.* 'The second special season in the life of a christian requiring more than a common diligence to keep his heart, is *the time of adversity:* When providence frowns upon you, and blasts your outward comforts, then look to your hearts, keep them with all diligence from repining against God, or fainting under his hand; for troubles, though sanctified, are troubles still; even sweet-briar, and holy thistle, have their prickles. Jonah was a good man, and yet how pettish was his heart under affliction? Job was the mirror of patience, yet how was his heart discomposed by trouble? You will find it as hard to get a composed spirit under great afflictions, as it is to fix quick-silver. O the hurries and tumults which they occasion even in the best hearts! Well, then, the second case will be this:'

Case 2. *How a Christian under great afflictions may keep his heart from repining, or desponding under the hand of God?* Now there are nine special helps, I shall here offer, to keep thy heart in this condition; and the first shall be this, to work upon your hearts this great truth,

1. *That by these cross providences, God is faithfully pursuing the great design of electing love upon the souls of his people, and orders all these afflictions as means sanctified to that end.*

Afflictions fall not out by casualty, but by counsel, Job v. 6. Eph. i. 11. by this counsel of God they are ordained as means of much spiritual good to saints, Isa. xxvii. 9. "By "this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged," *&c.* Heb. xii. 10. "But he for our profit," *&c.* Rom. viii. 28. "All things "work together for good." They are God's workmen upon our hearts, to pull down the pride and carnal security of them; and being so, their nature is changed; they are turned into blessings and benefits, Psalm cxix. 71. "It is good for me that "I have been afflicted." And sure, then, thou hast no reason to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God should concern himself so much in thy good, to use any means for the accomplishing of it. Philip. iii. 11. "Paul could bless God, if by any "means he might attain the resurrection of the dead. My "brethren, (saith James) count it all joy when you fall into "divers temptations," Jam. i. 2, 3. My father is about a design of love upon my soul, and do I well to be angry with him? All that he doth is in pursuance of, and in reference to some eternal glorious ends upon my soul. O it is my ignorance of God's design, that makes me quarrel with him! he saith to thee in this case, as to Peter, "What I do thou know-"est not now, but hereafter thou shalt know it."

And should you be troubled at that? Say, Christian, hast thou not many prayers depending before God upon such accounts as these; that he would keep thee from sin, discover to thee the emptiness and insufficiency of the creature; that he would kill and mortify thy lusts, that thy heart may never find rest in any enjoyment but Christ? Why now, by such humbling and impoverishing strokes, God may be fulfilling thy desire: Woudlst thou be kept from sin? Lo, *he hath hedged up thy way with thorns*. Wouldst thou see the creatures vanity? Thy affliction is a fair glass to discover it; for the vanity of the creature is never so effectually and sensibly discovered, as in our own experience of it. Wouldst thou have thy corruptions mortified? This is the way; now God takes away the food and fewel that maintained them; for as prosperity begat and fed them, so adversity, when sanctified, is a means to kill them. Wouldst thou have thy heart to rest no where but in the bosom of God? What better way canst thou imagine providence should take to accomplish thy desire, than by pulling from under thy head, that soft pillow of creature-delights on which thou restedst before? And yet you fret at this, peevish child, how dost thou exercise thy Father's patience? If he delay to answer thy prayers, thou art ready to say he regards thee not; if he do that which really answers the scope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedst, thou quarrellest with him for that; as if instead of answering, he were crossing all thy hopes and aims; is this ingenuous? Is it not enough that God is so gracious to do what thou desirest, but thou must be so impudent to expect he should do it in the way which thou prescribest.

Help 7. Again, It may stay thy heart, if thou consider, *That in these troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didst see the design of, thy soul would rejoice*. We, poor creatures, are bemisted with much ignorance, and are not able to discern how particular providences work towards God's end; and therefore, like Israel in the wilderness, are often murmuring, because Providence leads us about in a howling desart, where we are exposed to straits; though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, *by the right way, to a city of habitations*. If you could but see how God, in his secret counsel, hath exactly laid the whole plot and design of thy salvation, even to the smallest means and circumstances; this way, and by these means such a one shall be saved, and by no other; such a number of afflictions I appoint for this man, at this time, and in this order; they shall befal him thus, and thus they shall work for him: Could you, I say, but discern the admirable harmony of

divine dispensations, their mutual relations to each other, together with the general respect and influence they all have unto the last end; of all the conditions in the world, you would chuse that you are now in, had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of arras, made up of a thousand shreds, which single we know not what to make of, but put together, and stitched up orderly, they represent a beautiful history to the eye. As God works all things according to the counsel of his own will, so that the counsel of God hath ordained this as the best way to bring about thy salvation: Such a one hath a proud heart, so many humbling providences I appoint for him; such a one an earthly heart, so many impoverishing providences for him: Did you but see this, I need say no more to support the most dejected heart.

Help 8. Farther, It would much conduce to the settlement of your hearts, to consider, *That by fretting and discontent, you do yourselves more injury than all the afflictions you lie under could do;* your own discontent is that which arms your troubles with a sting; it is you that make your burden heavy, by struggling under it. Could you but lie quiet under the hand of God, your condition would be much easier and sweeter than it is; *Impatiens aegrotus crudelem facit medicum.* This makes God lay on more strokes, as a father will upon a stubborn child that receives not correction.

Besides, it unfits the soul to pray over its troubles, or take in the sense of that good which God intends by them: Affliction is a pill, which being wrapt up in patience and quiet submission, may be easily swallowed; but discontent chews the pill, and so imbitters the soul: God throws away some comfort which he saw would hurt you, and you will throw away your peace after it; he shoots an arrow which sticks in your cloaths, and was never intended to hurt, but only to fright you from sin; and you will thrust it onward to the piercing of your very hearts, by despondency and discontent.

Help 9. Lastly, If all this will not do, but thy heart, like Rachel, still refuses to be comforted, or quieted, then consider one thing more, which, if seriously pondered, will doubtless do the work; and that is this, *Compare the condition thou art now in, and art so much dissatisfied with, with that condition others are, and thyself deservest to be in:* Others are roaring in flames, howling under the scourge of vengeance, and amongst them I deserve to be. O my soul! is this hell? Is my condition as bad as the damned? O what would thousands now in

hell give, to change conditions with me! It is a famous inſtance which * Dr Taylor gives us of the duke of Conde; 'I 'have read (ſaith he) that when the duke of Conde had entered voluntarily into the incommodities of a religious poverty, 'he was one day eſpied and pitied by a lord of Italy, who out 'of tenderneſs, wiſhed him to be more careful and nutritive of 'his perſon. The good duke anſwered, Sir, be not troubled, 'and think not that I am ill provided of conveniencies, for I 'ſend an harbinger before me, who makes ready my lodgings, 'and takes care that I be royally entertained. The lord asked 'him, who was his harbinger? he anſwered, The knowledge of 'myſelf, and the conſideration of what I deſerve for my ſins, 'which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I 'arrive at my lodging, how unprovided ſoever I find it, me-'thinks it is ever better than I deſerve.' *Why doth the living man complain?* And thus the heart may be kept from deſponding, or repining under adverſity.

Seaſon 3. 'The third ſeaſon calling for more than ordinary 'diligence to keep the heart, is the time of Zion's troubles: 'When the church, like the ſhip in which Chriſt and his diſ-'ciples were, is oppreſſed, and ready to periſh, in the waves of 'perſecution; then good ſouls are ready to ſink, and be ſhip-'wrecked too, upon the billows of their own fears. I confeſs 'moſt men rather need the ſpur, than the reins in this caſe, and 'yet ſome ſit down as over-weighed with the ſenſe of the 'church's troubles. The loſs of the Ark coſt old Eli his life; 'the ſad poſture Jeruſalem lay in, made good Nehemiah's 'countenance change in the midſt of all the pleaſures and ac-'commodations of the court, Neh. ii. 2. Ah! this goes cloſe 'to honeſt hearts.'

'But though God allow, yea, command the moſt awakened 'apprehenſions of theſe calamities, and in "ſuch a day calls to '"mourning, weeping, and girding with ſackcloth," Iſa. xxii. '12. and ſeverely threatens the inſenſible, Amos vi. 1. yet it 'will not pleaſe him to ſee you ſit like penſive Elijah under the 'juniper-tree. 1 Kings xix. 4. "Ah Lord God! it is enough, '"take away my life alſo." No, mourners in Zion you may, 'and ought to be; but ſelf-tormentors you muſt not be; 'complain to God you may, but to complain of God, though 'but by an unſuitable carriage, and the language of your ac-'tions, you muſt not.'

Caſe 3. The third caſe that comes next to be ſpoken to, is this; *How public and tender hearts may be relieved, and ſup-*

* Great Exemp. p. 310.

ported, when they are even over-weighed with the burdenſome ſenſe of Zion's troubles? 'I grant, it is hard for him that preferreth Zion to his chief joy, to keep his heart that it ſink not below the due ſenſe of its troubles; and yet this ought, and may be done by the uſe of ſuch heart-eſtabliſhing directions as theſe.'

Direction 1. *Settle this great truth in your hearts, that no trouble befals Zion, but by the permiſſion of Zion's God; and he permits nothing out of which he will not bring much good at laſt to his people.*

There is truly a principle of quietneſs in the permitting, as in the commanding will of God. See it in David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. "Let him alone, it may be God hath bidden him:" And in Chriſt, John xix. 11. "Thou couldeſt have no power againſt "me, except it were given thee from above;" it ſhould much calm our ſpirits that it is the will of God to ſuffer it; and had he not ſuffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very conſideration quieted Job, Eli, David, and Hezekiah; that the Lord did it, was enough to them, and why ſhould it not be ſo to us? If the Lord will have Zion plowed as a field, and her goodly ſtones lie in the duſt; if it be his pleaſure that Antichriſt ſhall rage yet longer, and wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High; if it be his will that a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of hoſts ſhall be upon the valley of viſion, that the wicked ſhall devour the man that is more righteous than he, what are we that we ſhould conteſt with God? Fit it is that we ſhould be reſigned up to that will whence we proceeded, and that he that made us ſhould diſpoſe of us as he pleaſeth: he may do what ſeemeth him good without our conſent: doth poor man ſtand upon equal ground, that he ſhould capitulate with his Creator, or that God ſhould render him an account of any of his matters? It is every way as reaſonable we be content, however God diſpoſe of us, as that we be obedient to whatever he commands us.

But then, if we purſue this argument further by conſidering that God's permiſſions do all meet at laſt in the real good of his people, this will much more quiet our ſpirits. Do the enemies carry away the good figs, even the beſt among the people, into captivity? This looks like a ſad providence, but yet God ſends them thither for their good, Jer. xxiv. 5. Doth God take the Aſſyrian as a ſtaff in his hand, to beat his people with? Thoſe blows are ſmart, and make them cry; but the end of his ſo doing is, "That he may accompliſh his whole work upon

" mount Zion," Isa. x. 12. If God can bring much good out of the worst, and greatest evil of sin, much more out of temporal afflictions; and it is as evident that he will, as that he can do so. For it is inconsistent with the wisdom of a common agent to permit any thing, which he might prevent if he pleased, to cross his great design and end; and can it be imagined that the most wise God should do so?

Well then, as Luther told Melancthon, *Dicunt Philippus esse rector mundi*; so say I to you; Let infinite wisdom, power, and love, alone; for by these all creatures are swayed, and actions guided, in reference to the church: it is none of our work to rule the world, but to submit to him that doth; *Non caeca impetu volvuntur rotae*, the motions of providence are all judicious, the wheels are full of eyes; it is enough that the affairs of Zion are in a good hand.

Direction 2. Ponder this heart-supporting truth, in reference to Zion's trouble: *That how many troubles soever are upon her, yet her King is in her.*

What! hath the Lord forsaken his churches? Hath he sold them into the enemy's hand? doth he not regard what evil befals them? that our hearts sink at this rate? Is it not too shameful an undervaluing of the great God, and too much magnifying of poor, impotent men, to fear and tremble at creatures, whilst God is in the midst of us? The church's enemies are many and mighty; let that be granted, yet that argument with which Caleb and Joshua strove to raise their own hearts, is of as much force now, as it was then: " The Lord is with us, " fear them not," Num. xiv. 9. The historian tells us, that when Antigonus overheard his soldiers reckoning how many their enemies were, and so discouraging one another; he suddenly steps in among them with this question, ' And how many ' (said he) do you reckon me for?' Discouraged souls, how many do you reckon the Lord for? Is he not an over-match for all his enemies? Is not one Almighty more than many mighties? Doth his presence stand for nothing with us? " If God " be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. What, think you, was the reason of that great exploration Gideon made in Judges vi.? He questions, ver. 12, 13. he desires a sign, ver. 17. and after that another, ver. 36. and what was the end of all this, but that he might be sure the Lord was with him, and that he might but write this motto upon his ensign? " The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." So then, if you can be well assured the Lord is with his people, you will see thereby above all your discouragements; and that he is so,

you need not, with him, desire a sign from heaven; lo, you have a sign before you, even their marvellous preservation amidst all their enemies. If God be not with his people, how is it they are not swallowed up quick? Do their enemies want malice, power, or opportunity? No, but there is an invisible hand upon them. Well then, as it is, Exod. xxxiii. 14. let his presence give us rest; and though the mountains be hurled into the sea, though heaven and earth mingle together, fear not, God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.

Direction 3. *Ponder the great advantages attending the people of God in an afflicted condition.* If a low and an afflicted state in the world be really best for the church, then your dejections are not only irrational, but ungrateful; indeed, if you estimate the happiness of the church by its worldly ease, splendor, and prosperity, then such times will seem bad for it; but if you reckon its glory to consist in its humility, faith, patience, and heavenly-mindedness, no condition in the world abounds with advantages for these, as an afflicted condition doth. It was not persecutions and prisons, but worldliness and wantonness, that was the poison of the church: neither was it the earthly glory of its professors, but the blood of its martyrs, that was the seed of the church. The power of godliness did never thrive better than in affliction, and never ran lower than in times of greatest prosperity: when "we are left a poor and "an afflicted people, then we learn to trust in the name of the "Lord," Zeph. iii. 12. What say ye, sirs? Is it indeed for the saints advantage to be weaned from the love of, and delight in, ensnaring worldly vanities? To be quickened, and pricked forward with more haste to heaven, to have clearer discoveries of their own hearts, to be taught to pray more fervently, frequently, spiritually; to look and long for the rest to come, more ardently? If these be for their advantage, experience teaches us, that no condition is ordinarily blessed with such fruits as these, like an afflicted condition.

And is it well done, then, to repine and droop, because your father consults more the advantage of your souls, than the pleasing of your humours? Because he will bring you a nearer way to heaven than you are willing to go? Is this a due requital of his love, who is pleased so much to concern himself in your welfare? which is more than he will do for thousands in the world, upon whom he will not lay a rod, or spend an affliction for their good, Hos. iv. 17. Matth. xv. 14. But alas! we judge by sense, and reckon things good or evil, according to what we, for the present, can taste and feel in them.

Direction 4. *Take heed that you overlook not the many precious mercies which the people of God enjoy amidſt all their troubles.*

It is a pity that our tears, upon the account of our troubles, ſhould ſo blear and blind our eyes, that we ſhould not ſee our mercies and grounds of comfort. I will not inſiſt upon the mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward comforts, temporal conveniencies and accommodations, which you enjoy even above what Chriſt and his precious ſervants, of whom the world was not worthy, ever had.

But what ſay you to pardon of ſin? intereſt in Chriſt? the covenant of promiſe? and an eternity of happineſs, in the preſence of God after a few days are over? O that ever a people entitled to ſuch mercies as theſe, ſhould droop under any temporal affliction, or be ſo much concerned for the frowns of men, and loſs of trifles! you have not the ſmiles of great men, but you have the favour of the great God; you are, it may be, caſt back in your eſtates, but thereby furthered in ſpirituals. You cannot live ſo bravely, plentifully, and eaſily, as before; but ſtill you may live as holy and heavenly as ever: will you then grieve ſo much for theſe circumſtantials, as to forget your ſubſtantials? Shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember the church's true riches are laid out of the reach of all its enemies: they may make you poor, but not miſerable. What though God do not diſtinguiſh, in his outward diſpenſations, betwixt his own and others? Yea, what though his judgments ſingle out the beſt, and ſpare the worſt? What though an Abel be killed in love, and a Cain ſurvive in hatred; a bloody Dionyſius die in his bed, and a good Joſiah fall in battle? What though the belly of the wicked be filled with hidden treaſures, and the teeth of the ſaints broken with gravel-ſtones; yet ſtill here is much matter of praiſe; for electing love has diſtinguiſhed, though common providence did not; and whilſt proſperity and impunity ſlay the wicked, even ſlaying and adverſity ſhall benefit and ſave the righteous.

Direction 5. *Believe, that how low ſoever the church be plunged under the waters of adverſity, it ſhall aſſuredly riſe again.* Fear not, for as ſure as Chriſt aroſe the third day, notwithſtanding the ſeal and watch that was upon him; ſo ſure the church ſhall ariſe out of all her troubles, and lift up its victorious head over all its enemies: there is no fear of ruining that people who thrive by their loſſes, and multiply by being

dissatisfied. O be not too quick to bury the church before she is dead! stay till Christ hath tried his skill, before you give it up for lost. The bush may be all in a flame, but shall never be consumed, and that because of the good will of him that dwelleth in it.

Direction 6. *Record the famous instances of God's care and tenderness over his people in former straits.* Christ hath not suffered it to be devoured yet; for above these 1700 years the Christian church hath lived in affliction, and yet it is not consumed: many a wave of persecution hath gone over it, and yet it is not drowned: many designs to ruin it, and hitherto none hath prospered; this is not the first time that Hamans and Achithophels have plotted its ruin; that an Herod hath stretched out his hand to vex it: still it hath been preserved from, supported under, or delivered out of all its troubles; and is it not as dear to God as ever? Is he not as able to save it now, as formerly? Though we know not whence deliverance should arise, "Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of "temptations," 2 Pet. ii. 9.

Direction 7. If you can fetch no comfort from any of the former arguments, then, in the last place, *Try whether you cannot draw some comfort out of your very troubles.* Surely this trouble of yours is a good argument of your integrity; union is the ground of sympathy; if you had not some rich adventure in that ship, you would not tremble as you do, when it is in danger: besides, this frame of spirit may afford you this argument, that if you are sensible of the church's troubles, Jesus Christ is much more sensible of, and sollicitous about it, than you can be; and he will have an eye of favour upon them that mourn for it, Isa. lvii. 18.

Season 4. 'The fourth special season of expressing our utmost 'diligence in keeping our hearts, is the time of danger, and 'public distraction; in such times the best hearts are but too 'apt to be surprized by slavish fear; it is not easy to secure the 'heart against distractions in times of common distraction. If 'Syria be confederate with Ephraim, how do the hearts of the 'house of David shake, even as the trees of the wood, which 'are shaken with the wind? Isa. vii. 2. When there are omi-'nous signs in the heaven; on the earth distress of nations, 'with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring, then the hearts 'of men fail for fear, and for looking after those things which 'are coming on the earth, Luke xxi. 25, 26. Even a Paul 'himself may "sometimes complain of fightings within, when '"there are fears without," 2 Cor. vii. 5.

But, my brethren, these things ought not to be so, faith should be of a more raised spirit: So was David, when his heart was kept in a good frame, Psal. xxvii. 1. "The Lord is "my light, and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord "is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Let none but the servants of sin be the slaves of fear, let them that have delighted in evil, fear evil; *impius tantum metuit, quantum nocuit.* O let not that which God hath threatened as a judgment upon the wicked, ever seize upon the breasts of the righteous. "I will send (saith God) faintness into their hearts "in the land of their enemies, and the sound of a shaking leaf "shall chace them," Lev. xxvi. 36. O what poor-spirited men are these, to fly at a shaking leaf! which makes a pleasant, and not a terrible noise; and is in itself a kind of natural music: But to a guilty conscience the whistling leaves are drums and trumpets. "But God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but "of love, and of a sound mind," 2 Tim. i. 7. A sound mind as it stands there in opposition to the spirit of fear, is an unwounded conscience, not infirmed by guilt: And this should make a man as bold as a lion. I know it cannot be said of a saint, what God spake of Leviathan, that he is made without fear: There is a natural fear in every man, and it as impossible to be wholly put off, as the body itself is: *It is a perturbation of the mind, arising from the apprehension of approaching danger;* and as long as dangers can approach us, we shall find some perturbations within us. It is not my purpose to commend to you a stoical apathy, nor yet to take you off from such a degree of cautional preventive fear as may fit you for trouble, and be serviceable to your souls; there is a provident fear that opens our eyes to foresee danger, and quickens to a prudent and lawful use of means to prevent it: Such was Jacob's fear, Gen. xxxii. 7, 9, 10. *&c.* But it is the fear of diffidence I persuade you to keep your hearts from, that tyrannical passion which invades the heart in times of danger, distracts, weakens, and unfits the heart for duty; drives men upon unlawful means, and brings a snare with it. Well, then, the fourth case will be this:

Case 4. *How a Christian may keep his heart from distracting and tormenting fears, in times of great and threatening dangers.*

Now there are fourteen excellent rules, or helps, for the keeping the heart from sinful fear, when imminent dangers threaten us: And the first is this,

Rule 1. *Look upon all the creatures as in the hand of God, who manages them in all their motions, limiting, reſtraining, and determining them all at his pleaſure.*

Get this truth well ſettled by faith in your hearts, it will marvellouſly guard them againſt ſlaviſh fears. The firſt chapter of Ezekiel contains an admirable ſcheme, or draught of providence; there you may ſee the living creatures who move the wheels, *viz.* the great affairs and turnings of things here below, coming unto Chriſt, who ſits upon the throne, to receive new orders and inſtructions from him, ver. 24, 25, 26. And in Rev. vi. you read of white, black, and red horſes, which are nothing elſe but the inſtruments which God employs in executing his judgments in the world, as wars, peſtilence, and death: But when theſe horſes are prancing, and trampling up and down the world, here is that may quiet our hearts, that God hath the reins in his hand. Wicked men are ſometimes like mad horſes, they would ſtamp the people of God under their feet, but that the bridle of providence is in their lips, Job i. 11, 12. A lion at liberty is terrible to meet, but who is afraid of the lion in the keeper's hand?

Rule 2. *Remember that this God, in whoſe hand all the creatures are, is your Father, and is much more tender over you, than you are, or can be, over yourſelves:* "He that "toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye," Zech. ii. 8. Let me ask the moſt timorous woman, whether there be not a vaſt difference between the ſight of a drawn ſword in the hand of a bloody ruffian, and the ſame ſword in the hand of her own tender husband? As great a difference there is in looking upon creatures by an eye of ſenſe, and looking on them as in the hand of your God by an eye of faith; that is a ſweet ſcripture to this purpoſe, Iſa. liv. 5. "Thy Maker is thy Husband, the "Lord of Hoſts is his name:" he is Lord of all the hoſts of creatures in the world: Who would be afraid to paſs through an army, though all the ſoldiers ſhould turn their ſwords and guns towards him, if the general of that army were his friend, or father? I have met with an excellent ſtory of a religious young man, who being at ſea, with many other paſſengers, in a great ſtorm, and they being half dead with fear, he only was obſerved to be very cheerful, as if he had been but little concerned in that danger: One of them demanding the reaſon of his chearfulneſs, 'O, (ſaid he) it is becauſe the pilot of the 'ſhip is my father.' Conſider Chriſt, firſt as the King, and ſupreme Lord over the providential kingdom, and then as your

Head, Husband, and Friend, and thou wilt quickly say, "Re-"turn unto thy reſt, O my ſoul." This truth will make you ceaſe trembling, and cauſe you to ſing in the midſt of dangers. Pſalm xlvii. 7. "The Lord is King of all the earth, ſing ye "praiſe with underſtanding;" (or, as the Hebrew word is,) "Every one that hath underſtanding," *viz.* of this heart-reviving and eſtabliſhing doctrine of the dominion of our Father over all the creatures.

Rule 3. *Urge upon your hearts the expreſs prohibitions of Chriſt in this caſe: and let your hearts ſtand in awe of the violations of them.*

He hath charged you not to fear, Luke xxi. 9. "When ye "ſhall hear of wars and commotions, ſee that ye be not terri-"fied." And Phil. i. 28. "In nothing be terrified by your ad-"verſaries," Yea, in Matth. x. 26, 28, 31. and within the compaſs of ſix verſes, our Saviour commands us thrice, *not to fear man.* Doth every big word of proud duſt and aſhes make thee afraid? Doth the voice of a man make thee tremble? and ſhall not the voice of God? If thou art of ſuch a fearful and timorous ſpirit, how is it that thou feareſt not to diſobey the flat commands of Jeſus Chriſt? Methinks the command of Chriſt ſhould have as much power to calm, as the voice of a poor worm to terrify thy heart. Iſa. li. 12, 13. "I, even I, am he "that comforteth you: Who art thou, that thou ſhouldeſt be "afraid of a man that ſhall die, and of the ſon of man that "ſhall be made as the graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker?" We cannot fear creatures ſinfully, till we have forgotten God; did we remember what he is, and what he hath ſaid, we ſhould not be of ſuch feeble ſpirits: Bring thy heart, then, to this dilemma in times of danger; if I let into my heart the flaviſh fear of man, I muſt let out the reverential awe and fear of God; and dare I caſt off the fear of the Almighty for the frowns of a man? Shall I lift up proud duſt above the great God? Shall I run upon a certain ſin, to ſhun a probable danger? O keep thy heart by this conſideration!

Rule 4. *Remember how much needleſs trouble your vain fears have brought upon you formerly, and how you have diſquieted yourſelves to no purpoſe.*

Iſa. li. 13. "And haſt feared continually becauſe of the op-"preſſor, as if he were ready to devour; and where is the fu-"ry of the oppreſſor?" He ſeemed ready to devour, but yet you are not devoured: I have not brought upon you the thing that ye feared; you have waſted your ſpirits, diſordered your ſouls, and weakened your hands, and all this to no purpoſe:

You might have all this while enjoyed your peace, and poſſeſſed your ſouls in patience. And here I cannot but obſerve a very deep policy of Satan, managing a deſign againſt the ſoul by theſe vain fears: I call them vain, in regard of the fruſtration of them by Providence; but certainly they are not in vain, as to the end Satan aims at in raiſing them; for herein he acts as ſoldiers uſe to do in the ſiege of a garriſon, who on purpoſe to wear out the beſieged by conſtant watchings, and thereby unfit them to make reſiſtance when they ſtorm it in earneſt, do every night give them falſe alarms, which though they come to nothing, yet doth notably ſerve this further deſign of the enemy. O when will you beware of Satan's devices?

Rule 5. Conſider ſolemnly, *That though the things you fear ſhould really fall out, yet there is more evil in your own fear, than in the thing feared.*

And that not only as the leaſt evil of ſin is worſe than the greateſt evil of ſuffering; but as this ſinful fear hath really more torment and trouble in it, than is in that condition you are ſo much afraid of; fear is both a multiplying, and a tormenting paſſion; it repreſents troubles much greater than they are, and ſo tortures and wrecks the ſoul much worſe than when the ſuffering itſelf comes. So it was with Iſrael at the Red-ſea, they cried out, and were ſore afraid, till they put foot into the water, and then a paſſage was opened through thoſe waters, which they thought would have drowned them. Thus it is with us; we looking through the glaſs of carnal fear, upon the waters of trouble, the ſwellings of Jordan, cry out, O they are unfordable! we muſt needs periſh in them: But when we come into the midſt of thoſe floods, indeed, we find the promiſe made good; "God will make a way to eſcape," 1 Cor. x. 13. Thus it was with bleſſed Bilney, when he would make a trial, by putting his finger to the candle, and not able to endure that, he cried out, 'What, cannot I bear the burning of 'a finger? how then ſhall I be able to bear the burning of my 'whole body to-morrow?' And yet when that morrow came, he could go chearfully into the flames, with that ſcripture in his mouth, Iſa. xliii. 1, 2, 3. "Fear not, for I have redeem-"ed thee: I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; "when thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with "thee; when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not "be burnt."

Rule 6. *Conſult the many precious promiſes which are written for your ſupport and comfort in all dangers.*

Theſe are your refuges, to which you may fly and be ſafe; "When the arrows of danger fly by night, and deſtruction "waſteth at noon-day." There are particular promiſes ſuited to particular caſes and exigencies; and there are general promiſes, reaching all caſes and conditions: Such are theſe, Rom. viii. 28. "All things ſhall work together for good," *&c.* And Eccleſ. viii. 12. "Though a ſinner do evil an hundred times, and his "days be prolonged, yet it ſhall be well with them that fear "the Lord," *&c.* "Could you but believe the promiſes, "your hearts ſhould be eſtabliſhed," 2 Chron. xx. 29. Could you but plead them with God, as Jacob did. Gen. xxxii. 12. "Thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good," *&c.* they would relieve you in every diſtreſs.

Objection. *But that promiſe was made perſonally, and by name to him, ſo are not theſe to me.*

Anſwer. If Jacob's God be your God, you have as good an intereſt in them as he had. The church, a thouſand years after that tranſaction betwixt God and Jacob, applied that which God ſpake to him, as if it had been ſpoken to themſelves, Hoſ. xii. 4. "He found him in Bethel, and there he "ſpake with us."

Rule 7. *Quiet your trembling hearts by recording and conſulting your paſt experiences of the care and faithfulneſs of God in former diſtreſſes.*

Theſe experiences are food for your faith in a wilderneſs condition, Pſal. lxxiv. 14. By this David kept his heart in time of danger, 1 Sam. xvii. 37. and Paul his, 2 Cor. i. 10. It was ſweetly anſwered by Silentiarius, when one told him that his enemies way-laid him to take away his life, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* If God take no care of me, how have I eſcaped hitherto? You may plead with God old experiences to procure new ones; for it is in pleading with God for new deliverances, as it is in pleading for new pardons. Now mark how Moſes pleads on that account with God, Num. xiv. 19. "Pardon, I beſeech thee, the iniquity of this people, as "thou haſt forgiven them from Egypt until now." He doth not ſay as men do, Lord, this is the firſt fault, thou haſt not been troubled before to ſign their pardon: But, Lord, becauſe thou haſt pardoned them ſo often, I beſeech thee pardon them once again. So in new ſtraits, Lord, thou haſt often heard, helped, and ſaved in former fears; therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous redemption, and thine arm is not ſhortened.

Rule 8. *Be well ſatisfied that you are in the way of your duty, and that will beget holy courage in times of danger.*

" Who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is " good?" 1 Pet. iii. 13. Or, if any dare attempt it, " you " may boldly commit yourſelves to God in well-doing," 1 Pet. iv. 19. It was this conſideration that raiſed Luther's ſpirit above all fear: ' In the cauſe of God (ſaid he) I ever am, and ' ever ſhall be ſtout;' herein I aſſume this title, *Cedo nulli*, a good cauſe will bear up a man's ſpirit bravely. Hear the ſaying of a * heathen, to the ſhame of cowardly Chriſtians: ' When the emperor Veſpaſian had commanded Fluidius Priſcus ' not to come to the ſenate; or if he did, to ſpeak nothing but ' what he would have him; the ſenator returned this noble an- ' ſwer, That as he was a ſenator, it was fit he ſhould be at ' the ſenate; and if being there he were required to give his ' advice, he would ſpeak freely that which his conſcience com- ' manded him; the emperor threatening, that then he ſhould ' die; he anſwered, Did I ever tell you that I was immortal? ' Do you what you will, and I will do what I ought; it is in ' your power to put me to death unjuſtly, and in me to die ' conſtantly.'

Righteouſneſs is a breaſt plate, the cauſe of God will pay all your expences; let them tremble whom danger finds out of the way of duty.

Rule 9. *Get your conſciences ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt from all guilt, and that will ſet your hearts above all fear.*

It is guilt upon the conſcience that ſoftens and cowardizes our ſpirits: " The righteous are bold as a lion," Prov. xxviii. 1. It was guilt in Cain's conſcience that made him cry, " E- " very one that meets me ſhall ſlay me," Gen. iv. 14. A guilty conſcience is more terrified with conceited dangers, than a pure conſcience is with real ones. A guilty ſinner carries a witneſs againſt himſelf in his own boſom. It was guilty Herod cried out, " John Baptiſt is riſen from the dead." Such a conſcience is the devil's anvil, on which he fabricates all thoſe ſwords and ſpears, with which the guilty ſinner pierces and wounds himſelf; guilt is to danger, what fire is to gun-powder; a man need not fear to walk among many barrels of powder, if he have no fire about him.

Rule 10. *Exerciſe holy truſt in times of great diſtreſs.*

Make it your buſineſs to truſt God with your lives and comforts, and then your hearts will be at reſt about them. So did

* Char. of Wiſdom, p. 358.

David, Pſal. lvii. 3. "At what time I am afraid, I will truſt in "thee;" *q. d.* Lord, if at any time a ſtorm riſe, I will make bold to ſhelter me from it under the covert of thy wings. Go to God by acts of faith and truſt, and never doubt but he will ſecure you. Iſa. lxii. 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect "peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in "thee." God takes it well when thou comeſt to him thus; Father, my life, my liberty, or eſtate, are hunted after, and I cannot ſecure them; O let me leave them in thy hand: "The "poor leaveth himſelf with thee;" and doth his God fail him? No, "thou art the helper of the fatherleſs," Pſal. x. 14. that is, thou art the helper of the deſtitute one, that hath none to go to but God. And that is a ſweet ſcripture, Pſal. cxii. 7. "He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, "truſting in the Lord;" he doth not ſay, his ear ſhall be privileged from the report of evil tidings he may hear as ſad tidings as other men, but his heart ſhall be privileged from the terror of thoſe tidings, "his heart is fixed."

Rule 11. *Conſult the honour of religion more, and your perſonal ſafety leſs.*

Is it for the honour of religion, think you, that Chriſtians ſhould be as timorous as hares, to ſtart at every ſound? Will not this tempt the world to think, that whatever you talk, yet your principles are no better than other mens? O what miſchief may the diſcoveries of your fears before them do! It was a noble ſaying of Nehemiah, chap. vi. 11. "Should ſuch a man "as I flee? And who, being as I am, would flee?" Were it not better you ſhould die, than that the world ſhould be prejudiced againſt Chriſt by your example? For, alas! how apt is the world, who judge more by what they ſee in your practices, than by what they underſtand of your principles, to conclude from your timorouſneſs, that how much ſoever you commend faith, and talk of aſſurance, yet you dare truſt to theſe things no more than they, when it comes to the trial. O let not your fears lay ſuch a ſtumbling-block before the blind world.

Rule 12. *He that will ſecure his heart from fear, muſt firſt ſecure the eternal intereſt of his ſoul in the hands of Jeſus Chriſt.*

When this is done, then you may ſay, *Now world, do thy worſt.* You will not be very ſollicitous about a vile body, when you are once aſſured it ſhall be well to all eternity with your precious ſouls. "Fear not them (ſaith Chriſt) that can "kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do." The aſſured Chriſtian may ſmile with contempt upon all his

enemies, and ſay, Is this the worſt that you can do? What ſay you, Chriſtians? Are you aſſured that your ſouls are ſafe, that within a few moments of your diſſolution they ſhall be received by Chriſt into an everlaſting habitation? Well, if you be ſure of that, never trouble yourſelves about the inſtruments and means of your diſſolution.

Objection. *O, but a violent death is terrible to nature!*

Anſwer. But what matter is it, when thy ſoul is in heaven, whether it were let out at thy mouth, or at thy throat? Whether thy familiar friends, or barbarous enemies, ſtand about thy dead body, and cloſe thine eyes? Alas! it is not worth the making ſo much ado about; *Nihil corpus ſentit in nervo cum anima ſit in coelo*, thy ſoul ſhall not be ſenſible in heaven how thy body is uſed on earth; no, it ſhall be ſwallowed up in life.

Rule 13. *Learn to quench all ſlaviſh creature-fears, in the reverential fear of God.*

This is a cure by diverſion: It is a rare piece of Chriſtian wiſdom to turn thoſe paſſions of the ſoul which moſt predominate into ſpiritual channels; to turn natural anger into ſpiritual zeal, natural mirth into holy cheerfulneſs, and natural fear into an holy dread and awe of God. This method of cure Chriſt preſcribes in that forementioned place, Matth. x. like to which is that in Iſa. viii. 12, 13. *fear not their fear*; but how ſhall we help it? Why, "ſanctify the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, and let "him be your fear, and your dread." Natural fear may be allayed for the preſent by natural reaſon, or the removal of the occaſion, but then it is but like a candle blown out with a puff of breath, which is eaſily blown in again; but if the fear of God extinguiſh it, then it is like a candle quenched in water, which cannot eaſily be rekindled.

Rule 14. Laſtly, *Pour out thoſe fears to God in prayer, which the devil and your own unbelief pour in upon you in times of danger.*

Prayer is the beſt out-let to fear; where is the Chriſtian that cannot ſet his *probatum eſt* to this direction? I will give you the greateſt example in the world to encourage you in the uſe of it, even the example of Jeſus Chriſt, Mark xiv. 32. When the hour of his danger and death drew nigh, he gets into the garden, ſeparates from the diſciples, and there wreſtles mightily with God in prayer, even unto an agony: in reference to which the apoſtle ſaith, Heb. v. 7. "Who in the days of his fleſh, when "he had offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong cries "and tears, to him that was able to ſave him from death, and "was heard in that he feared." He was heard as to ſtrength

and ſupport to carry him through it, though not as to deliverance, or exemption from it.

Now, O that theſe things might abide with you, and be reduced to practice in theſe evil days, that many trembling ſouls may be eſtabliſhed by them.

Seaſon 5. 'The fifth ſeaſon to excite this diligence in keeping the heart, is a time of ſtraits and outward pinching wants; although at ſuch times we ſhould complain to God, and not of God, (the throne of grace being erected for a time of need, Heb. iv. 16.) yet when the waters of relief run low, and want begins to pinch hard, how prone are the beſt hearts to diſtruſt the fountain! when the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruiſe are almoſt ſpent, our faith and patience are almoſt ſpent too. Now it is difficult to keep down the proud and unbelieving heart in an holy quietude and ſweet ſubmiſſion at the foot of God. It is an eaſy thing to talk of truſting God for daily bread, while we have a full barn or purſe; but to ſay, as the prophet, Hab. iii. 17. "Though the fig tree ſhould not bloſſom, neither fruit be in the vine, *&c.* yet will I rejoice in "the Lord:" ſurely this is not eaſy.' The fifth caſe therefore ſhall be this:

Caſe 5. *How a Chriſtian may keep his heart from diſtruſting God, or repining againſt him, when outward wants are either felt or feared.*

This caſe deſerves to be ſeriouſly pondered, and eſpecially to be ſtudied now, ſince it ſeems to be the deſign of providence to empty the people of God of their creature-fulneſs, and acquaint them with thoſe ſtraits which hitherto they have been altogether ſtrangers to.

Now, to ſecure the heart from the afore-mentioned dangers attending this condition, theſe following conſiderations, through the bleſſings of the Spirit, may prove effectual. And the firſt is this:

Conſideration 1. *That if God reduce you to ſtraits and neceſſities, yet he deals no otherwiſe therein with you, than he hath done with ſome of the choiceſt and holieſt men that ever lived.*

Your condition is not ſingular; though you have hitherto been ſtrangers to wants, other ſaints have daily converſed, and been familiarly acquainted with them. Hear what bleſſed Paul ſpeaks, not of himſelf only, but in the name of other ſaints reduced to like exigencies, 1 Cor. iv. 11. "Even to this preſent "hour we both hunger and thirſt, and are naked and buffeted, "and have no certain dwelling-place." To ſee ſuch a man as Paul going up and down the world with a naked back, and

empty belly, and not a house to put his head in, one that was so far above thee in grace and holiness, one that did more service for God in a day, than perhaps thou hast done in all thy days, and yet you repine as if hardly dealt with! Have you forgot what necessities and straits even a David hath suffered? How great were his straits and necessities? 1 Sam. xxv. 8. "Give, I pray thee (saith he to Nabal) whatsoever cometh to "thy hand, to thy servants, and to thy son David." Renowned Musculus was forced to dig in the town-ditch for a maintenance. Famous Ainsworth (as I have been credibly informed) was forced to sell the bed he lay on to buy bread. But what speak I of these? Behold a greater than any of them, even the Son of God, "who is the heir of all things, and by whom the "worlds were made;" yet sometimes would have been glad of any thing, having nothing to eat, Mark xi. 12, 13. "And on the "morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hun-"gry; and seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, "if haply he might find [any thing] thereon."

Well then, hereby God hath set no mark of hatred upon you, neither can you infer the want of love from the want of bread. When thy repining heart puts the question, Was there ever any sorrow like unto mine? Ask these worthies, and they will tell thee, though they did not complain and fret as thou dost, yet they were driven to as great straits as thou art.

Consid. 2. *If God leave you not in this necessitous condition without a promise, you have no reason to repine or despond under it.*

That is a sad condition indeed, to which no promise belongs. I remember Mr Calvin, upon these words, Isa. ix. 1. "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation," resolves the doubt, in what sense the darkness of the captivity was not so great, as the lesser incursions made by Tiglath Pelesar. In the captivity the city was destroyed, and the temple burnt with fire, there was no comparison in the affliction; but yet the darkness should not be such, and the reason (saith he) is this, *Huic certam promissionem esse additam, cum in prioribus nulla esset; (i. e.)* there was a certain promise made to this, but none to the other.

It is better be as low as hell with a promise, than in paradise without one. Even the darkness of hell itself would be comparatively no darkness at all, were there but a promise to enlighten it. Now God hath left many sweet promises for the faith of his poor people to feed on in this condition: such are these:

Pſal. xxxiv. 9, 10. "O fear the Lord, ye his ſaints, for there "is no want to them that fear him; the lions do lack and ſuf- "fer hunger, but they that fear the Lord ſhall want nothing "that is good." Pſal. xxxiii. 18, 19. "The eye of the Lord "is upon the righteous, to keep them alive in famine." Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. "No good thing will he with-hold from them that "walk uprightly." Rom. viii. 32. "He that ſpared not his own "Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with "him alſo freely give us all things?" Iſa. xli. 17. "When the "poor and the needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their "tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the "God of Iſrael will not forſake them." Here you ſee, firſt, their extreme wants, water being put even for the neceſſaries of life. (2.) Their certain relief, *I the Lord will hear them;* in which it is ſuppoſed that they cry unto him in their ſtraits; and he hears their cry,

Having therefore theſe promiſes, why ſhould not your diſtruſtful hearts conclude like David's, Pſal. xxiii. 1. "The Lord "is my Shepherd, I ſhall not want."

Objection. *But theſe promiſes imply conditions; if they were abſolute, they would afford more ſatisfaction.*

Solution. What are thoſe tacit conditions you ſpeak of, but theſe: (1.) That either he will ſupply or ſanctify your wants: (2.) That you ſhall have ſo much as God ſees fit for you. And doth this trouble you? Would you have the mercy whether ſanctified or no? Whether God ſees it fit for you or no? Methinks the appetites of ſaints after earthly things ſhould not be ſo ravenous, to ſeize greedily upon any enjoyment, not caring how they have it.

But oh, when wants pinch, and we ſee not whence ſupplies ſhould come, then our faith in the promiſe ſhakes, and we, like murmuring Iſrael, cry, "He gave bread, can he give water al- "ſo?" O unbelieving hearts! When did his promiſe fail? Who ever truſted them, and was aſhamed? May not God upbraid thee with thine unreaſonable infidelity; as Jer. ii. 31. "Have I been a wilderneſs unto you?" *&c.* Or as Chriſt ſaid to the diſciples, "Since I was with you, lacked ye any thing?" Yea, may you not upbraid yourſelves, may you not ſay with good old Polycarp, Theſe many years I have ſerved Chriſt, and found him a good maſter. Indeed he may deny what your wantonneſs, but not what your real wants call for. He will not regard the cry of your luſts, nor yet deſpiſe the cry of your faith; though he will not indulge and humour your wanton appetites, yet he will not violate his own faithful promiſes. Theſe promiſes

are your beſt ſecurity for eternal life; and it is ſtrange if they ſhould not ſatisfy you for daily bread: remember ye the words of the Lord, and ſolace your hearts with them amidſt all your wants. It is ſaid of Epicurus, that in the dreadful fits of the cholic, he often refreſhed himſelf, *Ob memoriam inventorum*, by calling to mind his inventions in philoſophy: and of Poſſidonius the philoſopher, that in a great fit of the ſtone he ſolaced himſelf with diſcourſes of moral virtue: and when the pain twinged him, he would ſay, *Nihil agis, dolor; quamvis ſis moleſtus, nunquam confitebor te eſſe malum:* O pain, thou doſt nothing; though thou art a little troubleſome, I will never confeſs thee to be evil. If upon ſuch grounds as theſe they could ſupport themſelves under ſuch grinding and racking pains, and even delude their diſeaſes by them, how much rather ſhould the precious promiſes of God, and the ſweet experiences which have gone along ſtep by ſtep with them, make you to forget all your wants, and comfort you in every ſtrait.

Conſid. 3. *If it be bad now, it might have been worſe; hath God denied thee the comforts of this life? He might have denied thee Chriſt, peace, and pardon alſo, and then thy caſe had been woful indeed.* You know God hath done ſo to millions in the world: how many ſuch wretched objects may your eyes behold every day, that have no comfort in hand, nor yet in hope, are miſerable here, and will be ſo to eternity; that have a bitter cup, and nothing to ſweeten it; no, not ſo much as any hope that it will be better. But it is not ſo with you, though you be poor in this world, "yet rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promiſed," Jam. ii. 5. O learn to ſet ſpiritual riches over againſt temporal poverty. Balance all your preſent troubles with your ſpiritual privileges. Indeed if God had denied your ſouls the robes of righteouſneſs to cloath them, the hidden manna to feed them, the heavenly manſions to receive them; if your ſouls were left deſtitute as well as your bodies, you might well be penſive; but this conſideration hath enough to bring the conſidering ſoul to reſt under any outward ſtrait. It was bravely ſaid by Luther, when want began to pinch him, 'Let us be contented with our hard fare (ſaid he), 'for do not we feaſt with angels upon Chriſt, the bread of life?' "And bleſſed be God (ſaith Paul) who hath abounded to us in "all ſpiritual bleſſings," Eph. i. 3.

Conſid. 4. *This affliction, though great, is not ſuch an affliction, but God hath far greater, with which he chaſtiſes the dearly beloved of his ſoul in this world;* and ſhould he remove this,

and inflict those, you would account your present state a very comfortable state, and bless God to be as now you are.

What think ye, Sirs? Should God remove your present troubles, supply all your outward wants, give you the desire of your hearts in creature-comforts, but hide his face from you, shoot his arrows into your souls, and cause the venom of them to drink up your spirits? Should he leave you but a few days to the buffeting of Satan, and his blasphemous injection; should he hold your eyes but a few nights walking with horrors of conscience, tossing to and fro till the dawning of the day: should he lead you through the chambers of death, shew you the visions of darkness; and make his terrors set themselves in array against you: Then tell me if you would not count it a choice mercy to be back again in your former necessitous condition, with peace of conscience; and count bread and water, with God's favour, a happy state? O then, take heed of repining. Say not God deals hardly with you, lest you provoke him to convince you, by your own sense and feeling, that he hath worse rods than these for unsubmissive and froward children.

Consid. 5. *If it be bad now, it will be better shortly.*

O keep thy heart by that consideration: the meal in the barrel is almost spent; well, be it so, why should that trouble me, if I am almost beyond the need and use of all these things. The traveller hath spent almost all his money, but a shilling or two left: well, saith he, though my money be almost spent, yet my journey is almost finished too; I am near home, and then I shall be fully supplied. If there be no candles in the house, yet it is a comfort to think that it is almost day, and then there will be no need of candles. I am afraid, Christian, thou miscreckonest thyself, when thou thinkest thy provision is almost spent, and you have a great way to travel; many years to live, and nothing to live upon; it may be not half so many as thou supposest; in this be confident, if thy provision be spent, either fresh supplies are coming, though thou seest not from whence, or thou art nearer thy journey's end than thou reckonest thyself to be. Desponding soul, doth it become a man or woman travelling upon the road to that heavenly city, and almost arrived there, within a few days journey of his Father's house, where all his wants shall be supplied, to take on thus about a little meat, drink, or cloaths, which he fears he shall want by the way? It was a noble saying of the forty Martyrs, famous in the *Ecclesiastical Story*, when turned out naked in a frosty night to be starved to death, with these words they comforted one another, θερμην ὁ χειμων, &c. The winter indeed is sharp and

cold, but heaven is warm and comfortable; here we shiver for cold, but Abraham's bosom will make amends for all.

Objection 1. *But I may die for want.*

Solution. (1.) Who ever did so? When were the righteous forsaken? (2.) If so, your journey is ended, and you fully supplied.

Object. 2. *But I am not sure of that; were I sure of heaven, it were another matter.*

Sol. Are you not sure of that? Then you have other matters to trouble yourselves about than these: methinks these should be the least of all your cares: I do not find that souls perplexed and troubled about the want of Christ, pardon of sin, *&c.* are usually very anxious, or sollicitous about these things. He that seriously puts such questions as these, What shall I do to be saved? How shall I know my sin is pardoned? doth not usually trouble himself with, "What shall I eat, what "shall I drink, or wherewith shall I be clothed?"

Consid. 6. *Doth it become the children of such a Father to distrust his all-sufficiency, or repine at any of his dispensations?*

Do you well to question his care and love upon every new exigence? Say, have you not been ashamed of this formerly? Hath not your Father's seasonable provisions for you in former straits, put you to the blush, and made you resolve never to question his love and care any more? and yet will you renew your unworthy suspicions of him again? Disingenuous child! reason thus with thyself; If I perish for want of what is good and needful for me, it must either be because my Father knows not my wants, or hath not wherewith to supply them: or else regards not what becomes of me. Which of these shall I charge upon him? Not the first; for, Mark vi. 32. "My Father "knows what I have need of;" my condition is not hid from him: nor the second, "For the earth is the Lord's, and the "fulness of it, Psal. xxiv. 1. His name is *God all-sufficient*, Gen. xvii. 1. Not the last, for, "as a father pitieth his chil-"dren, so the Lord pities them that fear him," Psal. ciii. 13. "The Lord is exceeding pitiful, and of tender mercy," Jam. v. 11. "He hears the young ravens when they cry," Job xxxviii. 41. and will he not hear me? "Consider (saith Christ) the "fowls of the air," Matth. vi. 26. Not the fowls at the door, that are every day fed by hand, but the fowls of the air, that have none to provide for them. Doth he feed and cloath his enemies, and will he forget his children? He heard the very cry of Ishmael in distress, Gen. xxi. 17. O my unbelieving heart! dost thou yet doubt? Remember Hagar and the child.

Consid. 7. *Your poverty is not your sin, but your affliction on-*

ly! if by ſinful means you have not brought it upon yourſelves; and if it be but an affliction, it may be borne the eaſier for that.

It is hard indeed to bear an affliction coming upon us as the fruit and puniſhment of ſin; when men are under trouble upon that account, they uſe to ſay, O! if it were but a ſingle affliction coming from the hand of God by way of trial, I could bear it, but I have brought it upon myſelf by ſin, it comes as the puniſhment of ſin; the marks of God's diſpleaſure are upon it; it is the guilt within that troubles and galls more, than the want without.

But it is not ſo here, and therefore you have no reaſon to be caſt down under it.

Objection. *But though there be no ſting of guilt, yet this condition wants not other ſtings: As firſt, the diſcredit of religion; I cannot comply with mine engagements in the world, and thereby religion is like to ſuffer.*

Solution. It is well you have an heart to diſcharge every duty, yet if God diſable you by providence, it is no diſcredit to your profeſſion, becauſe you do not that which you cannot do, ſo long as it is your deſire and endeavour to do what you can and ought to do; and in this caſe God's will is, that lenity and forbearance be exerciſed towards you, Deut. xxiv. 12, 13.

Object. 2. *But it grieves me to behold the neceſſities of others whom I was wont to relieve and refreſh, but now cannot.*

Sol. If you cannot, it ceaſes to be your duty, and God accepts the drawing out of your ſoul to the hungry in compaſſion and deſire to help them, though you cannot draw forth a full purſe to relieve and ſupply them.

Object. 3. *But I find ſuch a condition full of temptations, a fore clog in the way to heaven.*

Sol. Every condition in the world hath its clogs and attending temptations; and were you in a proſperous condition, you might there meet with more temptations and fewer advantages than now you have: For though I confeſs poverty hath its temptations as well as proſperity, yet I am confident proſperity hath not thoſe excellent advantages that poverty hath: For here you have an opportunity to diſcover the ſincerity of your love to God, when you can live upon him, and find enough in him, and conſtantly follow him, even when all external inducements and motives fail. And thus I have ſhewed you how to keep your hearts from the temptations and dangers attending a poor and low condition in the world, when want pinches, and the heart begins to ſink, then improve and bleſs God for theſe helps to keep it.

Season 6. 'The sixth season of expressing this diligence in 'keeping the heart, is the season of duty; when we draw nigh 'to God in public, private, or secret duties, then it is time to 'look to the heart; for the vanity of the heart seldom discovers 'itself more than at such times. How oft doth the poor soul 'cry out, O Lord! how fain would I serve thee, but vain 'thoughts will not let me; I came to open my heart to thee, to 'delight my soul in communion with thee, but my corruptions 'have set upon me: Lord, call off these vain thoughts, and 'suffer them not to prostitute the soul which is espoused to thee, 'before thy face.' The sixth case then is this,

Case 6. *How the heart may be kept from distractions by vain thoughts, in the time of duty.*

There is a twofold distraction or wandering of the heart in duty: (1.) Voluntary and habitual, Psalm lxxviii. 8. "They "set not their hearts aright, and their spirit was not stedfast "with God." This is the case of formalists, and it proceeds from the want of an holy bent and inclination of the heart to God; their hearts are under the power of their lust, and therefore it is no wonder they go after their lust, even when they are about holy things, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. (2.) Involuntary and lamented distractions, Rom. vii. 21—24. "I find then a law, "that when I would do good, evil is present with me; O wretch-"ed man that I am," *&c.* This proceeds not from the want of a holy bent and aim, but from the weakness and imperfection of grace. And in this case the soul may make the like complaint against its own corruptions that Abijah did against Jeroboam, 2 Chron. xiii. 6, 7. "Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat "is risen up against his lord, when Rehoboam was young and "tender-hearted, and could not withstand him, and there are "gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial." Grace hath dominion, but lusts are mutinous and seditious, during the infancy thereof. But it is not my business to shew you how these distractions come into the heart, but rather how to get and keep them out of the heart: in order whereunto take these ten following helps.

Help 1. Sequester yourselves from all earthly employments, and set apart some time for solemn preparation to meet God in duty: You cannot come reeking hot out of the world into God's presence, but you will find a tang of it in your duties: It is with the heart a few minutes since plunged in the world, now at the feet of God, just as with the sea after a storm, which still continues working, muddy, and disquiet, though the wind be laid, and storm over: Thy heart must have some time to settle.

There are few muſicians that can take down a lute or viol, and play preſently upon it, without ſome time to tune it; there are few Chriſtians can preſently ſay, as Pſalm lvii. 7. "O God, my "heart is fixed, it is fixed." O when thou goeſt to God in any duty, take thy heart aſide, and ſay, O my ſoul, I am now addreſſing myſelf to the greateſt work that ever a creature was employed about: I am going into the awful preſence of God about buſineſs of everlaſting moment.

Oh my ſoul, leave trifling now, be compoſed, watchful, ſerious, this is no common-work; it is God-work, ſoul-work, eternity-work. I am now going forth bearing ſeed, which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come; pauſe a while upon thy ſins, wants, troubles; keep thy thoughts a while on theſe before thou addreſs thyſelf to duty. David firſt muſed, and then ſpake with his tongue, Pſal. xxxix. 3, 4. So Pſal. xlv. 1. "My heart is inditing," *&c.*

Help 2. Having compoſed thy heart by previous meditation, preſently ſet a guard upon thy ſenſes: How often are poor Chriſtians in danger of loſing the eyes of their mind by thoſe of their body; for this Job covenanted with his ſenſes, chap. xxxi. 1. for this David prayed, Pſal. cxix. 37. "Turn away mine "eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way." This may ſerve to expound that myſtical Arabian proverb, which adviſes to 'ſhut the windows that the houſe may be 'light:' It were excellent if you could ſay in your onſets upon duty, as an holy man once did, when he came off from duty: *Claudimini, oculi mei, claudimini,* &c. 'Be ſhut, O mine eyes, 'be ſhut: for it is impoſſible you ſhould ever ſee ſuch beauty 'and glory in any creature, as I have now ſeen in God.' You had need avoid all occaſions of diſtraction from without, for be ſure you will meet enough from within. Intention of ſpirit in the work of God, locks up the eye and ear againſt vanity. When Marcellus entered the gates of Syracuſe, Archimedes was ſo intent about his mathematical ſcheme, that he took no notice of the ſoldiers when they entered his very ſtudy with drawn ſwords; a *fervent* cannot be a *vagrant* heart.

Help 3. *Beg of God a mortified fancy.* A working fancy, ſaith one, how much ſoever it be extolled among men, is a great ſnare to the ſoul; except it work in fellowſhip with right reaſon, and a ſanctified heart: The phantaſy is a power of the ſoul placed between the ſenſes and the underſtanding, it is that which firſt ſtirs itſelf in the ſoul, and by its motions the other powers are ſtirred; it is the common ſhop where thoughts are firſt forged and framed, and as this is, ſo are they; if imaginations

be not first cast down, it is impossible that every thought of the heart should be brought into obedience to Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5. This fancy is naturally the wildest and most untameable power in the soul. Some Christians, especially such as are of hot and dry constitutions, have much to do with it.

And truly, the more spiritual the heart is, the more it is troubled about the vanity and wildness of it. O what a sad thing it is! that thy nobler soul must lackey up and down after a vain and roving fancy, that such a beggar should ride on horseback, and such a prince run after on foot; that it should call off the soul from attendance upon God, when it is most sweetly engaged in communion with him, to prosecute such vanities as it will start at such times before it! beg earnestly of God that the power of sanctification may once come upon it. Some Christians have attained such a degree of sanctification of their fancies, that they have had such sweetness left upon their hearts by the spiritual workings of it in the night-season: When thy fancy is more mortified, thy thoughts will be more orderly and fixed.

Help 4. *If thou wouldst keep thy heart from those vain excursions, realize to thyself by faith, the holy and awful presence of God in duties.*

If the presence of a grave man will compose us to seriousness, how much more the presence of an holy God? Thinkest thou thy soul durst be so gay and light, if the sense of a divine eye were upon it? Remember the place where thou art is the place of his feet, Isa. lx. 13. act faith upon the omniscicncy of God. "All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the "heart, trieth the reins, and I will give to every one of you "according to your works," Rev. ii. 23. "All things are na-"ked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do," Heb. iv. 12. Realize his infinite holiness; into what a serious, composed frame did the sight of God, in his holiness, put the spirit of the prophet? Is. vi. 5. Labour also to get upon thy heart due apprehensions of the greatness of God, such as Abraham had, Gen. xviii. 27. "I that am but dust and ashes have "taken upon me to speak to God." And lastly, remember the jealousy of God, how tender he is over his worship, Lev. x. 3. "And Moses said to Aaron, This is that the Lord spake, "saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and "before all the people I will be glorified."

'A man that is praying (saith Bernard) should behave him-'self as if he were entering into the court of heaven, where he

'ſees the Lord upon his throne, ſurrounded with ten thouſand 'of his angels and ſaints miniſtring unto him.' When thou comeſt from a duty in which thy heart hath been toying and wandering, thou mayeſt ſay, Verily, God was in this place, and I knew it not. Suppoſe all the impertinencies and vanities which have paſt through thine heart in duty were written out, and interlined with thy petitions, couldeſt thou have the face to preſent it to God? Should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in prayer, would not men abhor thee? Why, thy thoughts are vocal to God, Pſal. cxxxix. 2. If thou wert petitioning the king for thy life, would it not provoke him to ſee thee playing with thy bandſtrings, or catching at every fly that lights upon thy cloaths, whilſt thou art ſpeaking to him about ſuch ſerious matters? O think ſadly upon that ſcripture, Pſal. lxxxvii. 7. "God is greatly to be feared in the aſſemblies of his "ſaints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round "about him." Why did God deſcend in thunderings and lightnings, and dark clouds upon Sinai? Exod. xix. 16—18. Why did the mountains ſmoke under him? The people quake and tremble round about him, yea, Moſes himſelf not exempted? but to teach the people that great truth, Heb. xii. 28, 29. "Let us have grace whereby we may ſerve him acceptably, "with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a conſuming "fire!" Preſent God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quickly be reduced to a more ſerious frame.

Help 5. *Maintain a praying frame of heart in the intervals of duty.* What is the reaſon our hearts are ſo dull, careleſs, and wandering, when we come to hear or pray, but becauſe there have been ſuch long intermiſſions in our communion with God; by reaſon whereof the heart is out of a praying frame? If that ſpiritual warmth, thoſe holy impreſſions we carry from God in one duty, were but preſerved to kindle another duty, it would be of marvellous advantage to keep the heart intent and ſerious with God.

To this purpoſe thoſe intermediate ejaculations, betwixt ſtated and ſolemn duties, are of moſt ſweet and excellent uſe; by theſe one duty is, as it were, linked to another, and ſo the ſoul, as it were, wraps up itſelf in a chain of duties. That Chriſtian ſeldom miſſes his mark in ſolemn duty, that ſhoots up many of theſe darts in the intervals of duty. It is an excellent commendation Chriſt beſtows upon the ſpouſe, Cant. iv. 11. "Thy "lips, O my ſpouſe, drop as the honey-comb." Upon which text one gives this ſweet note; The honey-comb drops actually but ſometimes, but it always hangs full of ſweet drops ready

to fall: If our ejaculations were more, our lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

Help 6. *Endeavour to engage and raise thy affections to God in duty, if thou wouldst have thy distractions cured.*

A drooping eye, and a melting heart, are seldom troubled as others are upon this account: When the soul is intent upon any work, it gathers in its strength, and bends all the thoughts about it; and when it is deeply affected, it will be intent: the affections command the thoughts to go after them; deadness causes distraction, and distraction increases deadness: Could you but look upon duties as the galleries of communion in which you walk with God, where your souls may be filled with those ravishing and matchless delights that are in his presence, your soul would not offer to stir from thence.

It is with the heart in duty, as it is with those that dig for golden ore; they try here, and finding none, try there; and so go from place to place, till at last they hit upon the rich vein, and there they sit down. If thy heart could but once hit the rich vein in duty, it would dwell and abide there with delight and constancy. "O how I love thy law, it is my meditation "day and night!" Psal. cxix. 97. The soul could dwell day and night upon its knees, when once its delights, loves, and desires are engaged. What is the reason your hearts are so shuffling, especially in secret duties? Why are you ready to be gone, almost as soon as you are come into the presence of God, but because your affections are not engaged?

Help 7. *Mourn over the matter to God, and call in assistance from heaven, when vain thoughts assault thy heart in duty.*

When the messenger of Satan buffeted Paul by wicked injections, as is supposed, he goes to God, and mourns over it before him, 2 Cor. xii. 8. never slight wandering thoughts in duty as small matters: follow every vain thought with a deep sigh, turn thee to God, with such words as these; Lord, I came hither to speak with thee, and here a busy devil and a vain heart conspiring together have set upon me. O my God! what an heart have I? Shall I never wait upon thee without distraction! when shall I enjoy an hour of free communion with thee? Help me, my God, this once; do but display thy glory before mine eyes, and my heart shall quickly be recovered: Thou knowest I came hither to enjoy thee, and shall I go away without thee? See, how the heart of thy poor child works towards thee! strives to get near thee, but cannot: My heart is a-ground, "come thou "north-wind, blow south-wind;" O for a fresh gale now from

thy Spirit, to set my affections a-float! Couldst thou but thus affectionately bewail thy distractions to God, thou mightest obtain help and deliverance from them: He would say to Satan, and thine imperious lusts, as Ahasuerus said of Haman, What, will he force the queen before my face? Who are these, that set upon my child in my work and presence?

Help 8 *Look upon the success and sweetness of thy duties, as very much depending upon the keeping of thy heart close with God in them*

These two things, the success and sweetness of duty, are as dear to a Christian as his two eyes; and both of these must necessarily be lost, if the heart be lost in duty. Job xxxv. 13. "Surely, God heareth not vanity, neither doth the Almighty "regard it." The promise is made to an heart engaged, Jer. xxix. 13. "Then shalt ye seek me, and find me, when ye shall "search for me with all your hearts." Well, then, when thou findest thy heart under the power of deadness and distraction, say to thy soul, O what do I lose by a careless heart now! my praying times are the choicest parts, the golden spots of all my time: Could I but get up this heart with God, I might now obtain such mercies as would be matter for a song to all eternity.

Help 9. *Look upon it as a great discovery of the sincerity or hypocrisy of your hearts, according as you find them careful, or careless, in this matter.*

Nothing will startle an upright heart more than this: What, shall I give way to a customary wandering of heart from God? Shall the spot of the hypocrite appear upon my soul? They indeed can drudge on in the round of duty, never regarding the frames of their hearts, Ezek xxxiii. 31, 32. but shall I do so? When men come into the presence chamber, and the king is not there, they bow to the empty chair. O never let me be satisfied with empty duties! never let me take my leave of a duty, "until mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts."

Help 10. Lastly, *It will be of special use to keep thine heart with God in duties, to consider what influence all thy duties have into thy eternity.*

These are your seed-times, and what you sow in your duties in this world, you must look to reap the fruits of it in another world, Gal. vi. 7, 8. If you sow to the flesh, of that you shall reap corruption; but if to the Spirit, life everlasting. O my soul, answer seriously, wouldst thou be willing to reap the fruit of vanity, in the world to come? Darest thou say, when thy thoughts are roving to the ends of the earth in duty, when

thou ſcarce mindeſt what thou ſayeſt or heareſt; now, Lord, I am ſowing to the Spirit; now I am providing, and laying up for eternity; now I am ſeeking for glory, honour, and immortality; now I am ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait gate; now I am taking the kingdom of heaven by an holy violence? O ſuch a conſideration as this ſhould make the multitudes of vain thoughts that preſs in upon the heart in duty, to fly ſeven ways before it. And thus I have ſhewn you how to keep your hearts in the times of duty.

Seaſon 7. "The ſeventh ſeaſon calling for more than common 'diligence to keep the heart, is, when we receive injuries and 'abuſes from men. Such is the depravedneſs and corruption 'of man in his collapſed ſtate, that *homo homini lupus*, one man 'is become a *wolf*, a *tyger*, to another: They are, as the pro-'phet complains, Hab. i. 14. "As the fiſhes of the ſea, and as '"the creeping things, that have no ruler over them;" and as 'wicked men are cruel and oppreſſive one to another, ſo they 'conſpire together to abuſe and wrong the people of God, as 'the ſame prophet complains, ver. 13. "The wicked devour-'"eth the man that is more righteous than he." Now when 'we are thus abuſed and wronged, it is hard to keep the heart 'from revengeful motions; to make it meekly and quietly to 'commit the cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly; to exerciſe 'no other affection but pity towards them that abuſe us. Sure-'ly the ſpirit that is in us luſteth to revenge, but it muſt not be 'ſo; you have choice helps in the goſpel to keep down your 'hearts from ſuch ſinful motions againſt your enemies, and to 'ſweeten your imbittered ſpirits.' The ſeventh caſe, then, ſhall be this,

Caſe 7. *How a Chriſtian may keep his heart from revengeful motions, under the greateſt injuries and abuſes from men.*

The goſpel, indeed, allows a liberty to vindicate our innocency, and aſſert our rights, but not to vent our corruptions, and invade God's right. When, therefore, thou findeſt thy heart begin to be inflamed by revengeful motions, preſently apply the following remedies; and the firſt is this,

Remedy 1. *Urge upon thy heart the ſevere prohibitions of revenge by the law of God.* Remember that this is forbidden fruit, how pleaſant and luſcious ſoever it be to our vitiated appetites. O, ſaith nature, revenge is ſweet: O but, ſaith God, the effects thereof ſhall be bitter. How plainly hath God interdicted this fleſh-pleaſing ſin, Prov. xx. 22. "Say not, I will recom-'"pence evil." Prov. xxiv. 29. "Say not I will do ſo to him as '"he hath done to me." Rom. xii. 17. "Recompence to no

"man evil for evil." And ver. 19. "Avenge not yourſelves, "but rather give place to wrath." Nay, that is not all; but Prov. xxv. 21. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he "thirſt, give him drink." The word feed him, as critics obſerve, ſignifies to feed chearfully, and tenderly, as birds do their young ones: The ſcripture is a great friend to the peace and tranquillity of human ſociety, which can never be preſerved, if revenge be not depoſed. It was wont to be an argument urged by the Chriſtians to prove their religion to be ſupernatural and pure, that forbids revenge, which is ſo ſweet to nature; and verily it is a thouſand pities ſuch an argument ſhould be loſt. Well, then, awe your hearts with the authority of God in theſe ſcriptures, and when carnal reaſon ſaith, mine enemy deſerves to be hated, let conſcience reply, but doth God deſerve to be diſobeyed? Thus, and thus, hath he done, and ſo he hath wronged me; but what hath God done, that I ſhould wrong him? If he dare be ſo bold to break the peace, ſhall I be ſo wicked to break the precept? If he fears not to wrong me, ſhall not I fear to wrong God? O let the fear of God's threatnings repreſs ſuch ſinful motions.

Remedy 2. *Set before your eyes the moſt eminent patterns of meekneſs and forgiveneſs, that your ſouls may fall in love with them.*

This is the way to cut off thoſe common pleas of the fleſh for revenge: As thus, no man would bear ſuch an affront: Yes, ſuch and ſuch have borne as bad and worſe. I ſhall be reckoned a coward, a fool, if I paſs by this: No matter, as long as I follow the examples of the wiſeſt, and holieſt of men; never did any ſuffer more, and greater abuſes from men, than Chriſt did, and never did any carry it more peaceably, and forgivingly, Iſa. liii. 7. "He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet "he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the "ſlaughter," *&c.* This pattern of our Lord the apoſtle ſets before you for your imitation, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22, 23. "For even "hereunto are you called, becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, "leaving us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps: Who "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, "he threatened not, but committed himſelf to him that judg-"eth righteouſly:" To be of a meek, forgiving ſpirit, is Chriſt-like, God-like; "then ſhall you be the children of "your Father, which is in heaven; for he maketh his ſun to "riſe upon the evil and upon the good, and ſendeth rain on "the juſt and unjuſt," Matth. v. 45 How eminently, alſo, did this Spirit of Chriſt reſt upon his apoſtles? Never were

there ſuch men upon earth for true excellency of ſpirit. None were ever abuſed more, or ſuffered their abuſes better. "Being "reviled (ſay they) we bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer it; "being defamed, we intreat," 1 Cor iv. 12, 13 Mr Calvin, though a man of a quick ſpirit, yet had attained ſuch a degree of this Chriſt-like forgiveneſs, that when Luther had uſed ſome opprobrious language of him, the good man ſaid no more but this, 'Although he ſhould call me devil, yet I will 'acknowledge him to be an eminent ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt.'

I have often heard it reported of holy Mr. Dod, that when one, enraged at his cloſe, convincing doctrine, picked a quarrel with him, ſmote him on the face, and daſhed out two of his teeth; this meek ſervant of Chriſt ſpit out the teeth and blood into his hand, and ſaid, See, here, you have knocked out two of my teeth, and that without any juſt provocation; but on condition I might do your ſoul good, I would give you leave to daſh out all the reſt. Here is the excellency of a Chriſtian's ſpirit, above all the attainments of moral heathens: Though they were excellent at many other things, yet they could never attain this forgiving ſpirit. It is the firſt office of juſtice, ſaid Tully, to hurt no body, unleſs firſt provoked by an injury; whereupon Lactantius, *O quam ſimplicem veramque ſententiam, duorum verborum adjectione, corrupit!* What a dainty ſentence ſpoiled the orator, by adding thoſe two laſt words! Strive then for this excellency of ſpirit, which is the proper excellency of Chriſtians; do ſome ſingular thing that others cannot do, and then you will have a teſtimony in their conſciences. When Moſes out-did the *magicians*, they were forced to confeſs the finger of God in that buſineſs.

Remedy 3. *Conſider well the quality of the perſon that hath wronged thee;* either he is a good man, or a wicked man, that hath done thee the injury: If he be a good man, there is light and tenderneſs in his conſcience, and that will bring him at laſt to a ſenſe of the evil he hath done; however, Chriſt hath forgiven him greater injuries than theſe, and why ſhouldſt not thou? Will not Chriſt upbraid him, with any of thoſe wrongs done to him, but frankly forgive him all; and wilt thou take him by the throat for ſome petty abuſe that he hath done to thee?

Or is he a wicked man? If ſo, truly you have more need to exerciſe pity, than revenge towards him, and that upon a double account: For, (1.) He is beſide himſelf, ſo indeed is every unconverted ſinner, Luke xv. 17. Should you go into Bedlam, and there hear one rail at you, another mock you, and a third

threaten you; would you say, I will be revenged upon them? No, you would rather go away pitying them. Alas, poor creatures! they are out of their wits, and know not what they do. Besides,

(2.) There is a day coming, if they repent not, when they will have more misery than you can find in your hearts to wish them; you need not study to revenge, God's vengeance sleepeth not, and will shortly take place upon them, and is not that enough? Have they not an eternity of misery coming? If they repent not, this must be the portion of their cup; and if ever they do repent, they will be ready to make you reparation.

Remedy 4. *Keep down thy heart by this consideration, that by revenge thou canst but satisfy a lust, but by forgiveness thou shalt conquer a lust.*

Suppose by revenge thou shouldst destroy one enemy, I will shew thee how, by forgiving, thou shalt conquer three, thine own lust, the devil's temptation, and thine enemy's heart; and is not this a more glorious conquest? If by revenge thou overcome thine enemy, yet (as Bernard saith) *Infelix victoria, ubi superans virum succumbit vitio:* Unhappy victory, when, by overcoming another man, thou art overcome by thine own corruption. But this way you may obtain a glorious conquest indeed. What an honourable, and dry victory, did David this way obtain over Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. "And it came to "pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words, "that Saul lifted up his voice, and wept; and he said to Da"vid, thou art more righteous than I."

It must be a very disingenuous nature indeed, upon which meekness and forgiveness will not work; a stony heart, which this fire will not melt. To this sense is that, Prov. xxv. 21. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him "drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his "head." Some will have it a sin-punishing fire, but others a heart-melting fire. To be sure it will either melt his heart, or aggravate his misery. Augustine thinks that Stephen's prayer for his enemies was the great means of Paul's conversion.

Remedy 5. *Seriously propound this question to thy own heart, have I got any good by the wrongs and injuries received, or have I not?* If they have done you no good, turn the revenge upon yourselves: O that I should have such a bad heart, that can get no good out of such troubles! O that my spirit should be so unlike to Christ's! The patience and meekness of other Christians, have turned all the injuries thrown at them into precious stones; the spirits of others have been raised in blessing

God, when they have been loaded with reproaches from the world, they have bound them as an ornament to their necks. *Superbus fio* (said Luther) *quod video nomen peſſimum mihi treſtere.* I could even be proud upon it, that I have a bad name among wicked men. To the ſame purpoſe Jerom ſaid ſweetly, *Gratias ago Deo meo quod dignus ſum quem mundus oderit;* I thank my God that I am worthy to be hated of the world. Thus their hearts were provoked by injuries to magnify God, and bleſs him for them; if it work contrary with me, I have cauſe enough to be filled with ſelf-diſpliceney.

If you have got any good by them; if the reproaches and wrongs you have received, have made you ſearch your hearts the more, watch your ways the more narrowly; if their wronging you, has made you ſee how you have wronged God, then let me ſay for them, as Paul did himſelf, Pray forgive them this wrong.

What, can you not find an heart to forgive one that hath been inſtrumental of ſo much good to you? That is ſtrange! what though they meant it for evil? yet if God hath turned it to good, you have no more reaſon to rage againſt the inſtrument than he had who received a wound from his enemy which only brake, and let out that impoſthume which otherwiſe had been his death.

Remedy 6. *It is of excellent uſe to keep the heart from revenge, to look up, and eye the firſt cauſe by which all our troubles are ordered.*

This will calm and meeken our ſpirits quickly: never did a wicked tongue try the patience of a ſaint, more than David's was tried by that railing Shimei; yet the ſpirit of this good man was not at all poiſoned with revenge, though he goes along curſing, and caſting ſtones at him, all the way. Yea, though Abiſhai offered David, if he pleaſed, the head of that enemy; yet the king ſaid, "What have I to do with you, ye ſons of "Zureiah? So let him curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, curſe David: who then ſhall ſay, Wherefore haſt "thou done ſo?" It may be, God uſes him as his rod, to laſh me, becauſe I, by my ſin, made his enemies to blaſpheme him; and ſhall I be angry with the rod? How irrational were that? This alſo was it that quieted Job; he doth not rail, and vow revenge upon the Chaldeans and Sabeans, but eyes God as the orderer of thoſe troubles, and is quiet; "The Lord hath ta"ken away, bleſſed be his name, Job i. 21.

Objection. But you will ſay, *To turn aſide the right of a man,*

to ſubvert a man in his cauſe, the Lord approveth not, Lam. iii. 36.

Anſwer. True: but though it fall not under his approving, yet it doth under his permitting will, and there is a great argument for quiet ſubmiſſion in that; nay, he hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of all thoſe troubles. Did we ſee more of an holy God, we ſhould ſhew leſs of a corrupt nature in ſuch trials.

Remedy 7. *Conſider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be ſo eaſily inflamed with revenge againſt others that have wronged you.*

You are daily grieving, and wronging God, and yet he bears, forgives, and will not take vengeance upon you; and will you be ſo quick in avenging yourſelves upon others? O what a ſharp and terrible rebuke is that! Mat. xviii. 32, 33. "O thou "wicked and ſlothful ſervant; I forgave thee all that debt be- "cauſe thou deſireſt me, ſhouldſt not thou alſo have had com- "paſſion on thy fellow ſervant, even as I had pity on thee?" None ſhould be ſo filled with bowels of pity, forbearance, and mercy, to ſuch as wrong them, as thoſe ſhould be that have experienced the riches of mercy themſelves: methinks the mercy of God to us ſhould melt our very bowels into mercy over others; it is impoſſible we can be cruel to others, except we forget how kind Chriſt hath been to us. Thoſe that have found mercy, ſhould ſhew mercy: if kindneſs cannot work, methinks fear ſhould. "If ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, "neither will your Father forgive you your treſpaſſes," Matth. vi. 15.

Remedy 8. Laſtly, *Let the conſideration of the day of the Lord, which draweth nigh, with-hold your hearts from anticipating it by acts of revenge.*

Why are you ſo quick? Is not the Lord at hand, to avenge all his abuſed ſervants? "Be patient, therefore, my brethren, "unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the huſbandman "waiteth, *&c.* Be ye alſo patient, for the coming of the "Lord draws nigh: Grudge not one againſt another, brethren, "leſt ye be condemned. Behold the Judge ſtandeth at the "door," Jam. v. 7, 8, 9. This text affords three arguments againſt revenge: (1.) The Lord's near approach. (2.) The example of the huſbandman's patience. (3.) The danger we draw upon ourſelves by anticipating God's judgment; *Vengeance is mine,* ſaith the Lord; he will diſtribute juſtice more equally, and impartially, than you can: they who believe they have a

God to right them, will not ſo much wrong themſelves, as avenge their own wrongs.

Objection 1. *But fleſh and blood are not able to bear ſuch abuſes.*

Solution. If you reſolve to conſult fleſh and blood in ſuch caſes, and do no more but what that will enable you to do; never pretend to religion: Chriſtians muſt do ſingular, and ſupernatural things.

Object. 2. *But if I put up ſuch abuſes, I ſhall be reckoned a fool, and every one will trample upon me.*

Sol. (1.) You may be reckoned ſo among fools, but God and good men, will account it your wiſdom, and the excellency of your ſpirits. (2.) It muſt be a baſe ſpirit indeed, that will trample upon a meek, and forgiving Chriſtian: and thus learn to keep your hearts from revenge under all provocations.

Seaſon 8. 'The next ſeaſon in which we are in danger of 'loſing our hearts, is, when we meet with great croſſes, and 'provocations; then ſinful paſſion is apt to tranſport the heart. 'It is the fault of many good men to be of haſty and quick 'ſpirits, when provoked, though they dare not concoct anger 'into malice; for that would be a note of wickedneſs: yet are 'they very incident to ſudden anger, which is a ſign of weak-'neſs.' * Beza, in the life of Calvin, obſerves, 'that he was of 'a keen and haſty ſpirit;' and he that writes the life of the great Cameron †, ſaith, 'that his anger was ſoon ſtirred towards 'his near and familiar friends, but then he would eaſily depoſe 'it, and acknowlege his weakneſs.' Alas! when provocations and trials of our patience come, we know not what ſpirit we are of. The eight caſe, therefore, is this,

Caſe 8. *How the heart may be kept meek and patient under great croſſes and provocations.*

There are three ſorts of anger, *natural*, *holy*, and *ſinful* anger. (1.) *Natural*, which is nothing elſe but the motion of the iraſcible appetite towards an offenſive object; and this in itſelf is no ſin, they are propaſſions, rather than paſſions; the infelicities, rather than the ſins of nature, as Jerom calls them. Reaſon, ſaith Plutarch, is the *driver*, the ſoul is the *chariot*, and the two horſes that draw it on in all its motions, are the concupiſcible and iraſcible appetites; whilſt theſe are rightly managed by reaſon, they are not only lawful, but very uſeful to the ſoul. God would not have us to be ſtupid and inſenſate, though

* Bez. in Vit. Cal. p. 100. † Icon Cameronis.

he would have us to be meek, and patient. In Eph. iv. 26. he allows the natural motion, but forbids the ſinful exorbitancy. (2.) Holy anger, which is a pure flame, kindled by an heavenly ſpark of love to God, and in ſcripture is called *zeal*, which is, as one ſaith, the dagger which love draws in God's quarrel. Such was Lot's againſt the Sodomites, and that of Moſes againſt the idolatrous Iſraelites. When Servetus condemned Zuinglius for his harſhneſs, his anſwer was, *In aliis manſuetus ero, in blaſphemiis in Chriſtum, non ita;* In other caſes I will be mild, but in the cauſe of Chriſt, not ſo. That which the world calls moderation and mildneſs here, is in God's account ſtupidity and cowardlineſs; neither of theſe are that which I am now perſuading you to keep your hearts againſt. But, (3.) There is a ſinful paſſion, that is the thing which endangers you. Now anger becomes ſinful when it is either *cauſeleſs*, Matth. v. 22. or *exceſſive*; and that either in meaſure, or time, exceeding the value of the impulſive cauſe, be it more tranſient, or abiding; yet it is a ſin, and it is matter of humiliation before God. Now the means to keep the heart from it under provocations, are theſe:

Means 1. *Get low and humble thoughts of yourſelves, and then you will have meek ſpirits, and peaceable departments towards others.*

The humble, is ever the patient man; pride is the root of paſſion; a lofty will be a ſurly ſpirit: bladders blown up with wind, will not lie cloſe together; but prick them, and you may pack a thouſand in a little room: "Only by pride cometh con-"tention," Prov. xiii. 10. When we over rate ourſelves, then we think we are unworthily treated by others, and that provokes; and here, by the way, take notice of one great benefit of acquaintance with your own hearts, even the meekening and calming of your ſpirits Chriſtian, methinks, thou wouldſt know ſo much of thyſelf, that it is impoſſible any ſhould lay thee lower, or have baſer thoughts of thee, than thou haſt of thyſelf. Some render the original of that text, Hab. ii. 5. thus: "The proud man is as he that tranſgreſſeth by wine;" and drunkards, you know, are quarrelſome. O get more humility, and that will bring you more peace.

Means 2. *Be often ſweetening your ſpirits in communion with God, and they will not eaſily be intermitted with wrath towards men.*

A quiet *conſcience* never produced an unquiet *converſation*: the peace of God doth βραβευειν, rule in the heart, as an umpire,

in appeasing strifes; for so much that word, Col. iii. 15. imports, Wrath and strife are hugely opposite to the frame and temper of a spiritual heart, because inconsistent with the delight and contentment of that dove-like spirit which loves a sedate and quiet breast. O! saith the soul that feeds upon the sweet communion of the spirit, shall the sparks of provocations now catch in my passions, and raise such a smoke in my soul, as will offend, and drive away the Comforter from me? This is so effectual a remedy against passion, that I durst almost venture, in a Christian of a hasty nature, to make long suffering a sign of communion with God. Seest thou such a Christian quiet and calm under provocations, it is very like his soul feeds upon such sweetness in God as he is loath to leave; and on the other side, seest thou a Christian turbulent and clamourous, doubtless, all is not well within; his spirit is like a bone out of joint, which cannot move without pain and trouble.

Means 3. *Get due apprehensions of the evil nature and effects of sinful anger:* Ira furor brevis; *anger is a short madness, (saith one;)* Ira animae febris, *(saith another;) anger is the fever of the soul; It is the* interregnum and eclipse of reason, *(saith a third).*

The effects of it are also very sad.

(1.) "It grieves the Spirit of God," Eph. iv. 30. banishes him from that breast in which it rages, and tumultuates: God is the God of peace; the presence and comforts of God are only enjoyed in a calm. It is a golden note one gives upon the forecited text, God doth not usually bless with peace of conscience, such as make no conscience of peace. (2.) It gives advantage to the devil, Eph. iv. 26, 27. Satan is an angry and discontented spirit, and finds no rest but in restless hearts; he lives like the *salamander*, in fires of contention; he bestirs himself when the spirits are in a commotion; sometimes he fills the heart with revengeful thoughts, sometimes he fills the lips, and inflames the tongue with indecent language; even a meek Moses sometimes speaks unadvisedly with his lips. (3.) It dis-tunes the spirit for duty; upon this account the apostle dissuades husbands and wives from jarring carriages and contentions, that their prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. iii. 7. All acts of worship must be suitable to the object of worship; but God is the God of peace, the God of love. (4.) To mention no more, it disparages the Christian religion. How would Plato and Pythagoras shame us, if they were now living? Christ was a lamb for meekness, and doth it become his followers to be like

lions? O keep your hearts, or you will at once loſe not only your own peace, but the credit of religion.

Means 4. *Conſider how ſweet a thing it is to a Chriſtian to conquer his corruptions, and carry away the ſpoils of them.*

"He that is ſlow to anger is better than the mighty; and he "that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a city," Prov. xvi. 32. Is there any content in venting a paſſion? How much more in mortifying it? When thou comeſt, in a calm mood, or upon a death-bed to review thy life, how comfortable then will it be, to reflect upon the conqueſts thou haſt got by the fear of God, over the evil propenſions of thine own heart! It was a memorable ſaying of Valentinian the emperor, when he came to die: 'Amongſt all my conqueſts (ſaid he) there is but one 'that now comforts me; and being asked what that was, he 'anſwered, I have overcome my worſt enemy, mine own 'naughty heart.'

Means 5. *Shame yourſelves by ſetting before you thoſe eminent patterns that have been moſt excellent for meekneſs.*

Above all, compare your ſpirits with the Spirit of Chriſt; "Learn of me (ſaith he), for I am meek and lowly," Matth. xi. 29. Chriſt was meek and lowly, but I am proud and paſſionate; it was the high commendation of Moſes, Numb. xii. 3. "Now the man Moſes was meek above all the men of the "earth: and this was the man that knew God to face." It is ſaid of Calvin and Urſin, that they both were of choleric natures, but yet had ſo learned the meekneſs of Chriſt, as not to utter one word, under the greateſt provocation, unbeſeeming religion. When I read the pretty ſtories of the very heathens, that never had the advantages that we have, how the Pythagoreans, whatever feuds had been among them in the day, would huſh all, by ſending to each other this meſſage, *The ſun is almoſt ſet*; and that of Plato to his ſcholar, *I would beat thee, if I were not angry.*

When I read what lenity and tenderneſs Lycurgus ſhewed to an inſolent fellow that had ſtruck out one of his eyes; I am aſhamed to ſee how much Chriſtians are out-ſhot by heathens; who, by meer moral arguments and precepts, had thus meekened their ſpirits, and conquered their paſſions. The dim light of nature could teach Seneca to ſay, That anger will hurt a man more than the offence; for there is a certain bound in the offence, but I know not how far mine anger will carry me. It is a ſhame that theſe men who come ſo far behind us in means and advantages, ſhould ſo far out-ſtrip us in meekneſs and patience.

Means 6. Laſtly, *Avoid all irritating occaſions.*

He that will not hear the clapper, muſt not pull the rope: "Grievous words ſtir up anger," ſaith Solomon, Prov. xv. 1. Do not only pray, and reſolve againſt it, but get as far as you can out of the way of it; it is true ſpiritual valour, to run as faſt, and far as we can, out of ſin's way: If you can but avoid anger in its firſt riſe, there is no great fear of it afterwards; for it is not with this ſin as it is with other ſins; other ſins grow to their full ſtrength by degrees, their firſt motions are the weakeſt; but this ſin is born in its full ſtrength, it is ſtrongeſt at firſt; withſtand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your hearts when provocations ariſe.

Seaſon 9. The ninth ſeaſon of exerting our greateſt diligence, 'Is, the critical hour of temptation, wherein Satan lays cloſe 'ſiege to the fort-royal of a Chriſtian's heart, and often ſur-'prizes it for want of watchfulneſs: to keep the heart now, is 'no leſs a mercy than a duty; few Chriſtians are ſo well skilled 'in detecting fallacies, and retorting the arguments by which 'Satan uſes to draw them to ſin, as to come off ſafe in thoſe 'encounters. "Watch and pray (ſaith our Lord) leſt ye enter 'into temptation," Mark xiv. 38.' Even an eminent David, and a wiſe Solomon, have ſmarted for their careleſsneſs, at ſuch a time as this. The ninth caſe therefore ſhall be this,

Caſe 9. *How a Chriſtian, when ſtrongly ſollicited by the devil to ſin, may keep his heart from yielding to the temptation.*

Now there are ſix ſpecial arguments by which Satan ſubtilly inſinuates and winds in the temptation; in all which I ſhall offer thee ſome help for the keeping of thy heart; and the firſt is this:

Argument 1. The firſt argument is drawn from the pleaſure of ſin: O (ſaith Satan) here is pleaſure to be enjoyed: the temptation comes with a ſmiling countenance, and charming voice: what, art thou ſo phlegmatic and dull a ſoul, as not to feel the powerful charms of pleaſure? Who can with-hold himſelf from ſuch delights?

Now thine heart may be kept from the danger of this temptation, by retorting this argument of pleaſure upon the tempter; which is done two ways.

1. Thou telleſt me, Satan, that ſin is pleaſant; be it ſo: But are the gripes of conſcience, and the flames of hell ſo too? Is it pleaſant to feel the wounds and throbs of conſcience? If ſo, why did Peter weep ſo bitterly? Matth. xxvi. 75. Why did David cry out of broken bones? Pſal. li. I hear what thou ſayeſt of the pleaſure of ſin, and I have read what David hath

ſaid of the terrible effects of ſin in his Pſal. to bring to remembrance, Pſal. xxxviii. ver. 2. "Thine arrows ſtick faſt in me, "and thy hand preſſeth me ſore:" ver. 3. "There is no "ſoundneſs in my fleſh becauſe of thine anger; neither is there "any reſt in my bones, becauſe of my ſin:" ver. 4. "For "mine iniquities are gone over mine head as an heavy burden; "they are too heavy for me:" ver. 5. "My wounds ſtink, "and are corrupt, becauſe of my fooliſhneſs:" ver. 6. "I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all "the day long:" ver. 7. "My loins are filled with a loath-"ſome diſeaſe, and there is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh" ver. 8. "I am feeble and ſore broken, I have roared by reaſon of the "diſquietneſs of my heart.

Here I ſee the true face of ſin; if I yield to thy temptation, I muſt either feel theſe pangs of conſcience, or the flames of hell.

2. What talkeſt thou of the pleaſure of ſin, when, by experience, I know there is more true pleaſure in the mortification, than can be in the commiſſion of ſin? O how ſweet is it to pleaſe God, to obey conſcience, to preſerve inward peace! To be able to ſay, in this trial, I have diſcovered the ſincerity of my heart; now I know I fear the Lord, now I ſee that I truly hate ſin. Hath ſin any ſuch delight as this? This will choak that temptation.

Arg. 2. The ſecond argument is drawn from the ſecreſy of ſin: O (ſaith Satan) this ſin will never diſgrace thee abroad, none ſhall know it.

This argument may be retorted, and the heart ſecured thus: thou ſayeſt, none ſhall know it; but, Satan, canſt thou find a place void of the divine preſence for me to ſin in? Thus Job ſecured his heart from this temptation, Job xiii. 4. "Doth he "not ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps?" Therefore he makes a covenant with his eyes, ver. 1. After the ſame manner Solomon teacheth us to retort this temptation, Prov. v. 20, 21. "And why my ſon wilt thou be raviſhed with a ſtrange "woman, and embrace the boſom of a ſtranger? For the "ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponder-"eth all his goings." What if I hide it from the eyes of all the world for the preſent? I cannot hide it from God; and the time is at hand, when all the world ſhall know it too; for the word aſſures me, Luke viii. 17. "That what now is done in ſecret, ſhall "be proclaimed as upon the houſe-top." Beſides, is not my conſcience as a thouſand witneſſes? Do I owe no reverence to myſelf? Could the heathen man ſay, *Turpe quid aufurus, te ſine teſte time;* When thou art tempted to commit ſin, fear thyſelf

without any other witneſs: And ſhall not I be afraid to ſin before mine own conſcience, which always hath a reproof in its mouth, or a pen in its hand, to record my moſt ſecret actions?

Arg. 3. The third argument by which Satan tempteth to ſin is taken from the gain and profit ariſing out of it: why ſo nice and ſcrupulous? it is but to ſtretch conſcience a little, and thou mayeſt make thyſelf: now is thy opportunity!

The heart may be kept from falling into this dangerous ſnare, by retorting the temptation thus: But what profit will it be, if a man ſhould gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul? Shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in this world? There is an immortal ſpirit dwelling in this fleſhly tabernacle, of more value than all earthly things, which muſt live to all eternity, when this world ſhall lie in white aſhes. A ſoul for which Jeſus Chriſt ſhed his precious and invaluable blood. I was ſent into this world to provide for this ſoul; indeed God hath alſo committed to me the care of my body, but, (as * one happily expreſſes it) with this difference; a maſter commits two things to a ſervant, the child and the child's cloaths; will the maſter thank the ſervant, if he plead, I have kept the cloaths, but I have neglected the life of the child?

Arg. 4. The fourth argument is drawn from the ſmallneſs of the ſin; it is but a little one, a ſmall matter, a triſle; who would ſtand upon ſuch niceties?

This argument may be retorted three ways.

1. But is the majeſty of heaven a little one too? If I commit this ſin, I muſt offend and wrong a great God, Iſa. xl. 15, 16, 17,——22.

2. Is there any little hell to torment little ſinners in? Are not the leaſt ſinners there filled with the fulneſs of wrath? O there is great wrath treaſured up for ſuch as the world counts little ſinners.

3. The leſs the ſin, the leſs the inducement to commit it: What, ſhall I break with God for a triſle? Deſtroy my peace, wound my conſcience, grieve the Spirit, and all this for nothing? O what madneſs is this!

Arg. 5. A fifth argument is drawn from the grace of God, and hopes of pardon: Come, God will paſs by this as an infirmity, he will not be extreme to mark it.

But ſtay, my heart;

* Goſpel-Glaſs, p. 3.

1. Where do I find a promiſe of mercy to preſumptuous ſinners? Indeed for involuntary ſurpriſals, unavoidable and lamented infirmities, there is a pardon of courſe; but where is the promiſe to a daring ſinner, that ſins upon preſumption of pardon? Pauſe a while, my ſoul, upon that ſcripture, Numb. xv. 27,---30. "And if a ſoul ſin through ignorance, then he "ſhall bring a ſhe-goat, of the firſt year for a ſin offering, *&c.* "But the ſoul that doth ought preſumptuouſly, the ſame re-"proacheth the Lord, and that ſoul ſhall be cut off from a-"mong his people."

2. If God be a God of ſo much mercy, how can I abuſe ſo good a God? ſhall I take ſo glorious an attribute as the mercy of God is, and abuſe it unto ſin? Shall I wrong him becauſe he is good? Or ſhould not rather the goodneſs of God lead me to repentance? Rom. ii. 3. "There is mercy with "thee that thou mayeſt be feared," Pſal. cxxx. 4.

Arg. 6. *Laſtly*, Sometimes Satan encourages to ſin from the examples of good and holy men; thus, and thus they have ſinned and been reſtored, therefore this may conſiſt with grace, and thou be ſaved nevertheleſs. The danger of this temptation is avoided, and the heart ſecured, by retorting the argument theſe three ways:

1. Though good men may commit the ſame ſin materially, which I am tempted to, yet did ever any good man venture to ſin, upon ſuch a ground and encouragement as this?

2. Did God record theſe examples for my imitation, or for my warning? Are they not ſet up as ſea-marks, that I might avoid the rocks upon which they ſplit? 1 Cor. x. 6. "Now "theſe were our examples, to the intent that we ſhould not "luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted."

3. Am I willing to feel what they felt for ſin? O, I dare not follow them in the ways of ſin! *quia me veſtigia terrent*; Leſt God ſhould plunge me into the deeps of horror, into which he caſt them.

Thus learn to keep your hearts, in the hour of temptation, from ſin.

Seaſon 10. 'The tenth ſpecial ſeaſon to keep the heart with 'all diligence, is the time of ſpiritual darkneſs and doubting; 'when it is with the ſoul, as it was with Paul in his danger-'ous voyage, neither ſun, nor moon, nor ſtar appears for ma-'ny days: When by reaſon of the hidings of God's face, the 'prevalency of corruption, and the inevidence of grace, the 'ſoul is even ready to give up all its hopes and comforts for 'loſt; to draw ſad and deſperate concluſions upon itſelf; to

'call its former comforts vain deluſions; its grace hypocriſy. 'When the ſerene and clear heavens are overcaſt with dark 'clouds, yea, filled with thunders, and horrible tempeſts, when 'the poor penſive ſoul ſits down and weeps forth this ſad la- 'mentation, "My hope is periſhed from the Lord!" Now to 'keep the heart from ſinking in ſuch a day as this, to enable 'it to maintain its own ſincerity, is a matter of great difficul- 'ty.' The tenth caſe then will be this:

Caſe 10. *How the people of God, in dark and doubting ſeaſons, may keep their hearts from entertaining ſuch ſad concluſions about their eſtates, as deſtroy their peace, and unfit them for their duty.*

There are two general heads, to which the grounds of doubting our ſincerity may be reduced. (1.) God's carriage towards the ſoul, either in the time of ſome extraordinary affliction, or of ſome long and ſad deſertion. Or, (2.) The ſoul's carrriage towards God: And here it uſually argues againſt the truth of its own graces, either (1.) From its relapſes into the ſame ſins, from which it hath formerly riſen with ſhame and ſorrow. Or, (2.) From the ſenſible declining of its affections from God. Or, (3.) From the exceſs of the affections towards creature-comforts and enjoyments. Or, (4.) From its enlargements in public, and often ſtraitnings in private duties. Or, (5.) From ſome horrid injections of Satan, with which the ſoul is greatly perplexed. Or, laſtly, From God's ſilence, and ſeeming denial of its long depending ſuits and prayers.

Theſe are the common grounds of thoſe ſad concluſions: Now in order to the eſtabliſhment and ſupport of the heart in this condition, it will be neceſſary,

1. That you be acquainted with ſome general truths, which have a tendency to the ſettlement of a trembling and doubting ſoul.

2. That you be rightly inſtructed about the forementioned particulars, which are the grounds of your doubting.

The general truths requiſite for poor doubting ſouls to be acquainted with, are theſe:

1. *That every working and appearance of hypocriſy doth not preſently prove the perſon in whom it is, to be an hypocrite.* You muſt carefully diſtinguiſh between the *preſence* and *predominancy* of hypocriſy: There are remains of deceitfulneſs in the beſt hearts; David and Peter had ſad experience of it; yet the ſtanding frame and general bent of the heart being upright, it did not denominate them hypocrites.

2. *That we ought as well to hear what can be said for us as against us.* It is the ſin of upright hearts ſometimes to uſe an over-rigid, and mercileſs ſeverity againſt themſelves: They do not indifferently conſider the caſe of their own ſouls: It is in this caſe, as Solomon ſpeaks in another, Prov. xiii. 7. "There is that maketh himſelf rich, and yet hath nothing; "and there is that maketh himſelf poor, and yet hath great "riches." It is the damning ſin of the ſelf-flattering hypocrite, to make his condition better than it is: And it is the ſin and folly of ſome upright ones, to make their condition worſe than indeed it is. Why ſhould you be ſuch enemies to your own peace? To read over the evidences of God's love to your ſouls, as a man doth a book which he has a mind to confute? Why do you ſtudy to find evaſions, to turn off thoſe comforts which are due to you? It is ſaid of Joſeph, that he was minded to put away his eſpouſed Mary, not knowing that that holy thing which was conceived in her, was by the Holy Ghoſt: And this may be your caſe. And a third truth is this:

3. *That many a ſaint hath charged and condemned himſelf for that, which God will never charge him with, nor condemn him for.* "Why haſt thou hardened our hearts from thy fear," (ſaith the church) Iſa. lxiii. 17. and yet the verſe before manifeſts, that their hearts were not ſo hardened: Godly Bradford wrote himſelf an hypocrite, a painted ſepulchre; yet doubtleſs God acquitted him of that charge.

4. *Every thing which is a ground of grief to the people of God, is not a ſufficient ground of queſtioning their ſincerity.* There are many more things to trouble you, than there is to ſtumble you: If upon every ſlip and failing through infirmity, you ſhould queſtion all that ever was wrought upon you, your life muſt be made up of doubtings and fears: You can never attain a ſettled peace, nor live that life of praiſe and thankfulneſs, the goſpel calls for.

5. *The ſoul is not at all times fit to paſs judgment upon its own condition.* To be ſure in the dark day of deſertion, when the ſoul is benighted; and in the ſtormy day of temptation, when the ſoul is in a hurry, it is utterly unfit to judge its eſtate; "Examine your hearts upon your beds, and be ſtill," Pſal. iv. This is rather a ſeaſon for watching and reſiſting, than for judging and determining.

6. *That every breach of peace with God, is not a breach of covenant with God.* The wife hath many weakneſſes and failings, often grieves and diſpleaſes her huſband; yet in the main is faithful, and truly loves him: Theſe failings may cauſe

him to alter his carriage, but not to withdraw his love, or deny his relation. "Return, O backſliding Iſrael, for I am "married unto you."

7. Laſtly, *Whatever your ſin, or trouble be, it ſhould rather drive us to God, than from God.* "Pardon my ſin, for it is "great," Pſal. xxv. 11. Suppoſe it be true, that thou haſt ſo and ſo ſinned, that thou art thus long and ſadly deſerted; Yet it is a falſe inference, that therefore thou ſhouldſt be diſcouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digeſted theſe ſeven eſtabliſhing truths, if ſtill the doubt remain, then conſider, what may be replied to the particular grounds of theſe doubts. As,

1. You doubt, and are ready to conclude, the Lord hath no regard or love for your ſouls, becauſe of ſome extraordinary affliction which is come upon you: But I would not have thy ſoul ſo to conclude, till thou be able ſatisfactorily to anſwer theſe three queſtions.

Queſtion 1. If great troubles and afflictions be marks of God's hatred, why ſhould not impunity and conſtant proſperity be tokens of his love? For *contrariorum contraria eſt ratio & conſequentia?* of contrary things, there is a contrary reaſon and conſequence: But is this ſo indeed? or ſaith not the ſcripture quite otherwiſe? Prov. i. 32. "The proſperity of "fools deſtroys them." So Pſal. xxxvii. 5.

Queſt. 2. Dare I draw the ſame concluſion upon all others that have been as much, yea more afflicted than myſelf? If this argument conclude againſt thee, then ſo it doth againſt every one in thy condition; yea, the greater the affliction of any child of God hath been, the more ſtrongly the argument ſtill concludes: And then woe to David, Job, Heman, Paul, and all that have been afflicted as they were.

Queſt. 3. Had God exempted you only from thoſe troubles, which all other his people feel, would not that have been a greater ground of doubting to you than this? Eſpecially ſince the ſcripture ſaith, Heb. xii. 8. "If ye be without chaſtenings, "whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards, and not "ſons."

Oh how is our Father put to it by froward children! If he afflicts, then one cries, he loves me not: If he exempt from afflictions, others queſtion his love upon that ground. Surely you have other work to do, under the rod, than this.

2. Or do you raſhly infer, the Lord hath no love for you, becauſe he hides his face from you; that your condition is miſerable, becauſe dark and uncomfortable? Before you draw

ſuch raſh concluſions, ſee what anſwer you can give to theſe four following queries.

Query 1. *If any action of God towards his people will bear a favourable, as well as a harſh and ſevere conſtruction, why ſhould not his people interpret it in the beſt ſenſe?* And is not this ſuch? May he not have a deſign of love, as well as of hatred, in this diſpenſation? May he not depart for a ſeaſon, and not for ever; yea, that he might not depart for ever? You are not the firſt that have miſtaken God's ends in deſertion. Iſa. xlix. 14. "Sion ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, my God "hath forgotten me:" Was it ſo, indeed? Nothing leſs. Ver. 15. "Can a mother forget," *&c.*

Query 2. *Do you find the marks of an abſolute, total, and final deſertion upon your own ſpirits, that you are ſo apt to conclude yours to be ſuch?* Do you find your hearts inclined to forſake God? Have you loſt your conſcientious tenderneſs in point of ſin? If ſo, ſad characters appear upon you indeed; but if in this dark hour you are as tender of ſin as ever, as much reſolved to cleave to God as ever; I cannot, I will not forſake God, let him do what he will with me: O no, I cannot. If your hearts work thus, it can be but a partial, limited, and temporary deſertion; by this he ſtill keeps his intereſt in your hearts, a ſure ſign he will return, and viſit you again.

Query 3. *Is ſenſe and feeling a competent judge of God's actions and deſigns?* Or may a man ſafely rely upon its teſtimony, after ſo many diſcoveries of the fallibility of it? Is this a ſound argument? If God had any love for my ſoul, if it were not quite gone, I ſhould feel it now, as well as in former times; but I cannot feel it, therefore it is quite gone. Do you not know the ſun ſtill keeps on his courſe in the heavens, even in dull and cloſe weather, when you cannot ſee it? And may it not be ſo with the love of God? Read Iſa. l. 10. May not I as well conclude in winter, when the flowers have hid their beautiful heads under ground, they are quite dead, and gone, becauſe I cannot find them in December, where I ſaw them in May?

Query 4. Think you the Lord cares not to break his children's hearts, and his own promiſe too? Hath he no more regard to either? If he return no more, theſe muſt be the conſequents, Iſa. lvii. 16, 17. Heb. xiii. 5.

Well, then, from God's carriage towards you, either in affliction, or deſertion, no ſuch diſcouraging, heart-ſinking concluſions can be inferred. Next, let us ſee whether they may

not be inferred from our carriage towards God; and here the principal grounds of doubting are such as these:

1. I have fallen again into the same sin from which I have formerly risen with repentance and resolution; therefore my sinning is customary sinning; a spot that is not the spot of God's children. Hence the upright soul trembles; upon this it is ready to affirm, that all its former humiliations for, and oppositions unto sin, were but acts of hypocrisy. But stay, poor trembling heart.

Query 1. *If this be so, how comes it to pass that Christ put such a favourable construction upon the disciples sleeping the third time, when he had as often reproved them for it?* Matth. xxvi. 40, 41. and how is it that we find in scripture so many promises made to God's people, not only upon their first sins, but upon their backslidings also? Jer. iii. 22. Hos. xiv. 4.

Query 2. *Is not your repentance and care renewed as often as your guilt is renewed?* Yea, the oftener you sin, the more you are troubled; it is not so in customary sinning, the rise whereof * Bernard excellently discovers. 1. (Saith he) When a man accustomed to good, sinneth grievously, it seems insupportable, yea, he seems to descend alive into hell. 2. In process of time it seems not insupportable, but heavy; and betwixt insupportable and heavy, there is no small descent. 3. Next it becomes light, his conscience smites but faintly, and he feels not the stripes of it. 4. Then there is not only a total insensibleness of it, but that which was bitter and displeasing, is now become sweet, and pleasing, in some degree. 5. Then it is turned into custom, and not only pleases, but daily pleases. Lastly, Custom is turned into nature; he cannot be pulled away from it, but defends and pleads for it: This is customary sinning, this is the way of the wicked; but the quite contrary is your condition.

Query 3. *Are you sure, from scripture grounds, that good men may not relapse again, and again, into the same sin?* It is true, as for gross sins, they do not use to relapse into them: David committed adultery no more: Paul persecuted the church no more: Peter denied Christ no more: But I speak of ordinary infirmities. Job's friends were good men, yet (saith he) chap. xix. 3. "These ten times have ye reproached me." So, then, no such conclusions follow from this first ground of doubting.

* *Lib. de Consc. p.* 109.

2. *The second ground is the declining and withering of our affections to spiritual things.* O! (saith the upright soul) if ever I had been planted a right seed, I should have been as a green olive-tree in the house of my God; but my branches wither, therefore my root is naught. But stay,

Query 1. *May you not be mistaken about the decay of grace, and fading of your affections?* What if they are not so quick and ravishing as at first, may not that be recompensed in the spirituality and solidity of them now? Phil. i. 9. "I "pray God your love may abound more and more in all judg-"ment:" It may be more *solid*, though not so *fervorous*; or do you not mistake, by looking forward to what you would be, rather than backward to what once you were? It is a good note of Ames, we discern the growth of grace, as the growth of plants, which we perceive rather *Grevisse quam crescere*, to *have* grown, than to grow.

Query 2. *But grant it be so indeed, as you affirm, must it needs follow, that the root of the matter is not in you?* David's last ways are distinguished from his first, 2 Chron. xvii. 3. and yet both first and last a holy man. The church of Ephesus is charged by Christ for leaving her first love, and yet a golden candlestick, many precious saints in that church, Rev. ii. 2, 3, 4.

3. A third ground of these sad conclusions, is, the excess of your affections to some creature-enjoyments. I fear, I love the creature more than God; and if so, my love is but hypocritical: I sometimes feel stronger, and more sensible motions of my heart to earthly comforts, than I do to heavenly objects, therefore my soul is not upright in me. But stay, O soul,

Query 1. *May not a man love God more solidly, and strongly, than the creature, and yet his affections to the creature be sometimes moved more violently, and sensibly, than towards God?* As rooted malice argues a stronger hatred, than a sudden, though more violent passion: So we must measure our love, not by a violent motion of it, now and then, but by the depth of the root, and constancy of its actings. Because David was so passionately moved for Absalom, Joab concludes, that if he had lived, and all the people died, "it would have "pleased him well," 2 Sam. xix. 7. But that was argued more like a soldier, than a logician.

Query 2. *If you indeed love the creature for itself, if you make it your end, and religion but a means, then the conclusion is rightly drawn upon you.* But if you love the creature

in reference to God, and see nothing in it separated from him, though sometimes your affections offend in the excess; this is consistent with sincere love to God. To love the creature inordinately, (*i. e.*) to put it in God's room, and make it a man's end; this is the love of a carnal heart; to love it immoderately, that is, to let out more affection to it than we ought, is sometimes the sin of the best hearts.

Query 3. *Have not many souls feared, as you do, that when Christ and creatures shall stand as competitors in some eminent trial, they should forsake Christ rather than the creature; and yet when brought to that dilemma, have been able to cast all the world at their heels for Christ?* Many of the martyrs had such fears, and they were satisfied; the prevalency of love is best seen at parting; there may be more love to Christ in thy soul, than thou art now aware of; and if God bring thee to such a pinch, thou mayest see it.

4. A fourth ground of these sad conclusions, is from hence, that we find our hearts sometimes more straitned in private, than in public duties. O! if my soul were sincere, its actings in duty would be uniform. I fear I am but a Pharisee upon this ground. It is sad, indeed, we should at any time find our hearts straitened in private. But,

Query 1. *Do not all thine enlargements in duty, whether public, or private, depend upon the Spirit, who is the Lord of influences; and according as he gives out, or holds back those influences, so art thou enlarged, or straitened?* And what if sometimes he pleases to give that in a public, which he withholds in a private duty, as long as thy soul is satisfied in neither, without communion with God, and the straitness of thy heart is indeed its burden? Doth that argue thee to be an hypocrite?

Query 2. *Dost thou not make conscience of private duties, and set thyself as before the Lord in them?* Indeed, if thou live in the constant neglect, or careless performance of them; if thou art *curious* about public, and *careless* about private duties, that would be a sad sign: but when you have conscientiously performed, and often met with God in them, it will not follow that you are insincere, because that communion is sometimes interrupted. Besides,

Query 3. *May there not be something, at sometimes, in a public, which is wanting in a private duty, to raise and advantage thine affections?* God may sometimes make use of the melting affections of them with whom thou hearest, or pray-

eſt, as petty inſtruments to move thy affections; this advantage is wanting in private; therefore from hence (the caſe ſo ſtanding) no ſuch inference can be drawn.

5. Another ground is from thoſe horrid injections of Satan with which the ſoul is greatly perplexed; by theſe I may ſee what an heart I have: Can grace be where thoſe are?

Yes, grace may be where ſuch thoughts are, though not where they are lodged, and conſented to. Doſt thou cry out under the burden? Enter thy proteſt in heaven againſt them, ſtrive to keep up holy and reverend thoughts of God; then it is *violence*, not a voluntary *proſtitution*.

6. The laſt ground of theſe ſad concluſions, is, the Lord's long ſilence, and ſeeming denial of our long depending ſuits, and prayers. O if God had any regard to my ſoul, he would have heard my cries before now! But I have no anſwer from him, therefore no intereſt in him. But ſtay, doubting ſoul,

Query 1. *Have not many ſaints ſtumbled upon this ſtone, before thee?* Pſal. xxxi. 22. "I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off "from before thine eyes: nevertheleſs thou heardeſt the voice "of my ſupplication." So the church, Lam. iii. 44. "Thou "covereſt thyſelf with a cloud, that our prayers ſhould not "paſs through." Jonah ii. 4. "Then ſaid I, I am caſt out of "thy ſight." And may not you be miſtaken in this matter, as well as they?

Query 2. *Though God's abhorring, and final rejecting prayer, be an argument of his abhorring the perſon that prays; yet dare we conclude ſo from a mere ſuſpenſion of the anſwer? God may bear long with his own elect, that cry unto him day and night,* Luke xviii. 7.

Query 3. *Can you deny but that there are ſome ſigns appearing in your ſouls, even whilſt God ſuſpends his anſwer, that argue your prayers are not rejected by him?* As, (1.) Though no anſwer come, yet you are ſtill reſolved to wait: You dare not ſay as that profane wretch did, 2 Kings vi. 33. "This evil is "of the Lord, why ſhould I wait for him any longer?" (2.) You can clear and juſtify God ſtill, and lay the reaſon and cauſe of his ſilence upon yourſelves. So did David, Pſal. xxii. 2, 3. "O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou heareſt "not; and in the night, and am not ſilent, but thou art holy," *&c.* (3.) The ſuſpenſion of God's anſwer makes you inquiſitive into your own hearts, what evils are there that obſtruct your prayers. So the church, Lam. iii. 8. "He ſhutteth out my "prayer:" And how doth this work? You may ſee, ver. 40. "Let us ſearch and try our ways." Well, then, neither

from hence may you conclude that God hath no love for your ſouls.

And thus I have ſhewn you how to keep your hearts, in a dark and doubting ſeaſon, from thoſe deſperate concluſions of unbelief. God forbid any falſe heart ſhould encourage itſelf from theſe things; it is our unhappineſs that when we give ſaints and ſinners their proper portions, that each of them are ſo prone to take up the other's part. *Caution.*

Seaſon 11. The eleventh ſpecial ſeaſon calling for this diligence to keep your hearts, is, when ſufferings for religion come to an height, then look to your hearts, Matth. xxiv. 8, 9, 10. "All theſe are the beginning of ſorrows, and they ſhall deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you; and ye ſhall be hated of all nations for my name's ſake; and then ſhall many be offended." When ſufferings for religion grow hot, then bleſſed is he that is not offended in Chriſt, troubles are then at an height. (1.) When a man's neareſt friends and relations forſake and leave him, Mic. vii. 5, 6. 2 Tim. iv. 16. When a man is engaged alone. (2.) When it comes to reſiſting to blood, Heb. xii. 4. (3.) When temptations are preſented to us in our ſufferings, Heb. xi. 37. (4.) When eminent perſons for profeſſion turn aſide, and deſert the cauſe of Chriſt, 2 Tim. ii. 19. (5.) When God hides his face in a ſuffering hour, Jer. xvii. 17. (6.) When Satan falls upon us with ſtrong temptations, to queſtion the grounds of our ſufferings, or the ſoul's intereſt in Chriſt: Now it is hard to keep the heart from turning back, and the ſteps from declining God's ways." The eleventh queſtion, then, ſhall be this:

Caſe 11. *How the heart may be kept from relapſing under the greateſt ſufferings for religion?* If the bitterneſs of ſufferings at any time cauſe thy ſoul to diſtaſte the way of God, and take up thoughts of forſaking it; ſtay thine heart under that temptation, by propounding theſe eight queſtions ſolemnly to it.

Queſtion 1. *What reproach and diſhonour ſhall I pour upon Chriſt, and religion, by deſerting him at ſuch a time as this?* This will proclaim to all the world, that how much ſoever I have boaſted of the promiſes, yet, when it comes to the trial, I dare hazard nothing upon the credit of them: And how will this open the mouths of Chriſt's enemies to blaſpheme? O better had I never been born, than that worthy name ſhould be blaſphemed thro' me! Shall I furniſh the ti-

umphs of the uncircumcised? Shall I make mirth in hell? O, if I did but value the name of Christ, as much as many a wicked man values his own name, I could never endure to see it exposed to such contempt! Will proud dust and ashes venture death, yea, hell, rather than a blot upon their names? And shall I venture nothing to salve the honour and reputation of Christ?

Quest. 2. *Dare I violate my conscience to serve my flesh? Who shall comfort me when conscience wounds me?* What comfort is there in life, liberty, or friends, when peace is taken away from the inner man? When Constantius threatened to cut off Samosatenus's right-hand, if he would not subscribe somewhat that was against his conscience, he held up both his hands to the messenger that was sent, saying, he shall cut off both, rather than I will do it: Farewel all peace, joy, and comfort, from that day forward. "Had Zimri peace, that slew his "master?" said Jezebel. So say I here, had Judas peace? Had Spira peace? And shall you have peace, if you tread in their steps? O consider what you do!

Quest. 3. *Is not the public interest of Christ and religion, infinitely more than any private interest of my own?* It is a famous passage, that of Terentius, captain to Adrian the emperor, he presented a petition to Adrian, that the Christians might have a temple by themselves, to worship God apart from the Arians: The emperor tore his petition, and threw it away, bidding him to ask something for himself, and it should be granted. But he modestly gathered up the pieces of his petition again, and told him, 'If he could not be heard 'in God's cause, he would never ask any thing for himself.' Yea, even Tully, though an heathen, could say, *Ne immortalitatem quidem contra rempublicam*; he would not accept even of immortality itself, against the commonwealth. O if we had more public, we should not have such cowardly spirits!

Quest. 4. *Did Jesus Christ serve me so, when, for my sake, he exposed himself to far greater sufferings than can be, before me?* His sufferings were great indeed, he suffered from all hands, in all his offices, in every member, not only in his body, but in his soul; yea, the sufferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings: Witness the bloody sweat in the garden; witness that heart-melting, and heaven-rending outcry upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou for-"saken me?" And yet he flinched not, "he endured the "cross, despising the shame." Alas! what are my sufferings, compared with Christ's? He hath drank up all that vinegar

and gall that would make my sufferings bitter. When one of the martyrs was asked why he was so merry at his death? O, said he, it is because the soul of Christ was so heavy at his death. Did Christ bear such a burden for me, with unbroken patience, and constancy; and shall I shrink back from momentary, and light afflictions, for him?

Quest. 5. *Is not eternal life worth the suffering of a moment's pain?* If I suffer with him, I shall reign with him. O how will men venture life and limb for a fading crown, swim through seas of blood to a throne! and will I venture nothing? suffer nothing for the crown of glory that fadeth not away? My dog will follow my horse's heels from morning to night, take many a weary step through mire and dirt, rather than leave me, though at night all he gets by it is but bones, and blows: If my soul had any true greatness, any sparks of generosity in it, how would it despise the sufferings of the way, for the glory of the end? how would it break down all difficulties before it? whilst, by an eye of faith, it sees the forerunner, who is already entered, standing, as it were, upon the walls of heaven, with the crown in his hand, saying, "He "that overcometh shall inherit all things." Come on, then, my soul, come on, there is eternal life laid up for them that, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, Rom. ii. 7.

Question 6. *Can I so easily cast off the society and company of the saints, and give the right-hand of fellowship to the wicked?* How can I part with such lovely companions as these have been? How often have I been benefited by their counsels? Ezra x. 3. how often refreshed, warmed, and quickened by their company? Eccl. iv. 10, 11. how often have I fasted and prayed with them? What sweet counsel have I taken with them, and gone to the house of God in company? And shall I now shake hands with them, and say, Farewel all ye saints, for ever; I shall never be among you more: Come drunkards, swearers, blasphemers, persecutors, you shall be my everlasting companions? O rather let my body and soul be rent asunder, than that ever I should say thus to the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight.

Quest. 7. *Have I seriously considered the terrible scripture-comminations against backsliders?* O my heart! darest thou turn thy back upon the very point of such threatenings as these? Jer. xvii. 5, 6. "Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the "man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and "whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be lik-

" the heath in the deſart, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh," (*i. e.*) The curſe of God ſhall wither him root and branch. And Heb. x. 26, 27. " If we ſin wilfully, after we have re- " ceived the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more " ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, " and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries." And again, ver. 38. " If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall " have no pleaſure in him :" As if he ſhould ſay, ' Take him ' world, take him, devil, for your own, I have no delight in ' him.' O who dare draw back, when God has hedged up the way with ſuch terrible threats as theſe!

Queſt. 8. *Can I look Chriſt in the face, at the day of judgment, if I deſert him now?*

" He that is aſhamed of me and of my words, in this adul- " terous and ſinful generation, of him ſhall the Son of man " be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with " the holy angels," Mark viii. 38. Yet a little while, and you ſhall ſee the ſign of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; the laſt trump ſhall ſound, the dead, both ſmall and great, even all that ſleep in the duſt ſhall awake, and come before that great white throne, on which Chriſt ſhall ſit in that day. And now do but imagine thou ſaweſt the trembling knees, and quivering lips of guilty ſinners; imagine thou heardeſt the dreadful ſentence of the Judge upon them, " Go, ye curſed," *&c.* and then a cry. Oh! the weeping, wailing, and wringing of hands, that there ſhall be. Wouldſt thou deſert Chriſt now, to protract a poor, miſerable life on earth? If the word of God be true, if the ſayings of Chriſt be ſealed and faithful, this ſhall be the portion of the apoſtate. It is an eaſy thing to ſtop the mouth of conſcience now, but will it be eaſy to ſtop the mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy heart, that it depart not from the living God.

Seaſon 12. The twelfth ſeaſon of looking diligently to our hearts, and keeping them with greateſt care, is the time of ſickneſs: ' When a child of God draws nigh to eternity, when ' there are but a few ſands more in the upper part of his glaſs ' to run down; now Satan buſily beſtirs himſelf; of him ' it may be ſaid, as of the natural ſerpent, *nunquam niſi mori- ' ens producitur in longum*; he is never ſeen at his full length ' till dying: And now his great deſign, ſince he cannot win ' the ſoul from God, is to diſcourage, and make it unwilling ' to go to God, though the gracious ſoul, with Jacob, ſhould ' then rouſe up itſelf upon a dying bed, and rejoice that the

'marriage-day of the Lamb is now almoſt come; though it 'ſhould then ſay, with dying Auſtin, *vivere renuo ut Chriſto 'vivam*; I deſpiſe life to be with Chriſt. Or as dying Milius, 'when one aſked him, whether he were willing to die? O ſaid 'he, *illus eſt nolle mori, qui nolit ire ad Chriſtum*; let him be 'unwilling to die, who is unwilling to go to Chriſt. But O! 'what ſhrinking from death? What loathneſs to depart, may 'ſometimes (indeed too frequently) be obſerved in the people 'of God? How loath are ſome of them to take death by the 'cold hand? If ſuch a liberty were indulged to us, not to be 'diſſolved till we diſſolve ourſelves; when ſhould we ſay with 'St. Paul, "I deſire to be diſſolved?" Well then, the laſt caſe ſhall be this.

Caſe 12. *How the people of God, in times of ſickneſs, may get their hearts looſe from all earthly engagements, and perſuade them into a willingneſs to die.*

And there are ſeven arguments, which I ſhall urge upon the people of God at ſuch a time as this, to make them chearfully entertain the meſſengers of death, and die, as well as live, like ſaints. And the firſt is this:

Argument 1. Firſt, *The harmleſneſs of death to the people of God.* Though it keeps its *dart*, it hath loſt its ſting: A ſaint (to allude to that, Iſa. xi. 8.) "May play upon the hole of the "aſp, and put his hand into the cockatrice's den." Death is the cockatrice, or aſp, the grave is his hole or den; a ſaint need not fear to put his hand boldly into it: It hath left and loſt its ſting in the ſides of Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death! where "is thy ſting?" Why art thou afraid, O ſaint, that this ſickneſs may be thy death, as long as thou knoweſt that the death of Chriſt is the death of death? Indeed, if thou didſt die in thy ſins, as John viii. 21. if death, as a king, did reign over thee, Rom. v. 14. If it could feed upon thee, as the lion doth upon the prey he hath taken, as Pſalm xlix. 14. If "hell followed "the pale horſe," as it is, Rev. vi. 8. then thou mighteſt well ſtartle and ſhrink back from it; but when God hath put away thy ſins from thee, "as far as the eaſt is from the weſt," Pſal. ciii. 12. as long as there is no other evil left in death, for thee to encounter with, but bodily pain; as long as the ſcriptures repreſent it to thee under ſuch harmleſs and eaſy notions, as the putting off thy cloaths, 2 Cor. v. 2. "And lying down to ſleep "upon thy bed," Iſa. lvii. 2. Why ſhouldſt thou be afraid? There is as much difference betwixt death to the people of God, and others, as betwixt the unicorn's horn, when it is up-

on the head of that fierce beaſt, and when it is in the apothecary's ſhops, where it is made ſalubrious and medicinal.

Arg. 2. *Thy heart may be kept from ſhrinking back at ſuch a time as this, by conſidering the neceſſity of death, in order to the full fruition of God.*

Whether thou art willing to die or no, I aſſure thee there is no other way to obtain the full ſatisfaction of thy ſoul, and complete its happineſs; till the hand of death do thee the kind office to draw aſide the curtain of the fleſh, thy ſoul cannot ſee God: This animal life ſtands betwixt him and thee, 2 Cor. v. 6. "Whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from "the Lord." Thy body muſt be refined and caſt into a new mould, elſe that new wine of heavenly glory would break it. Paul in his higheſt rapture, 2 Cor. xii. 4. when he heard things unutterable, was then but as a ſtander-by, a looker on, not admitted into the company as one of them; but as the angels are in our aſſemblies, ſo was Paul in that glorious aſſembly above, and no otherwiſe; and yet even for this he muſt, as it were, be taken out of the body, uncloathed for a little time, to have a glimpſe of that glory, and then put on his cloaths again. O then! who would not be willing to die for a full ſight and enjoyment of God? Methinks thy ſoul ſhould look and ſigh like a priſoner, through the grates of this mortality; "O that "I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away, and be at "reſt:" Moſt men need patience to die, but a ſaint that underſtands what death admits him to, ſhould rather need patience to live; methinks he ſhould often look out, and liſten on a death-bed for his Lord's coming; and when he receives the news of his approaching change, ſhould ſay, "The voice "of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping over the moun-"tains, ſkipping over the hills," Cant. ii. 8.

Arg. 3. *Another argument perſuading to this willingneſs, is the immediate ſucceſſion of a more excellent and glorious life.*

It is but a wink, and you ſhall ſee God: Your happineſs ſhall not be deferred till the reſurrection; but as ſoon as the body is dead, the gracious ſoul is ſwallowed up in life, Rom. viii. 10, 11. When once you have looſed from this ſhore, in a few moments, your ſouls will be wafted over upon the wings of angels to the other ſhore of a glorious eternity. Phil. i. 23. "I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt." Did the ſoul and body die together, as Berilius taught; or did they ſleep till the reſurrection, as others have groundleſly fancied; it had been a madneſs for Paul to deſire a diſſolution for the

enjoyment of Christ: For if this were so, he enjoyed more of Christ whilst his soul dwelt in his fleshly tabernacle, than he should out of it.

There are but two ways of the soul's living, known in scripture, *viz.* the life of *faith*, and the life of *vision*, 1 Cor. v. 7. Those two divide all time, both present and future, betwixt them, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. If when faith fails, sight should not immediately succeed, what would become of the unbodied soul? But blessed be God this great heart-establishing truth is evidently revealed in scripture, Luke xxiii. 43. You have Christ's promise, John xiv. 3. "I will come and receive you to myself." O what a change will a few moments make upon your condition? Rouse up, dying saint; when thy soul is come out a little further; when it shall stand like Abraham at its tent-door, the angels of God shall soon be with it: the souls of the elect are, as it were, put out to the angels to nurse, and when they die, these angels carry them home again to their Father's house: if an angel were caused to fly swiftly to bring a saint the answer of his prayer, Dan. ix. 22. how much more will the angels come post from heaven to receive and transfer the praying soul itself?

Arg. 4. Farther, *It may much conduce to thy willingness to die, to consider, that by death, God oftentimes hides his people out of the way of all temptations and troubles upon earth*, Rev. xiv. 13. "Write, from henceforth, Blessed are the dead which "die in the Lord." It is God's usual way, when some extraordinary calamities are coming upon the world, to set his people out of harms way before-hand, Isa. lvii. 1. "Merciful "men are taken away from the evil to come." So Mic. vii. 2. when such an evil time comes as is there described, "That "they all ly in wait for blood, and every man hunts his brother "with a net:" God, by an act of favour, houses his people before-hand. Dost thou know what evil may be in the earth, which thou art so loath to leave? Thy God removes thee for thy great advantage; thou art disbanded by death, and called off the field; other poor saints must stand to it, and endure a great fight of afflictions.

It is observed that Methuselah died the very year before the flood; Augustine, a little before the sacking of Hippo; Pareus, just before the taking of Heidelburgh: Luther observes, that all the apostles died before the destruction of Jerusalem: and Luther himself died before the wars broke out in Germany. It may be the Lord sees the tender heart cannot endure to see the

miſery, or bear the temptations that are coming, and therefore will now gather thee to thy grave in peace; and yet wilt thou cry, O ſpare me a little longer?

Arg. 5. *If yet thy heart hang back, conſider the great advantage you will have by death, above all that ever you enjoyed on earth*; and that, (1.) As to your communion with God: (2.) As to your communion with ſaints.

1. For your communion with God: the time of perfecting that is now come: thy ſoul ſhall ſhortly ſtand before the face of God, and have the immediate emanations and beamings forth of his glory upon it; here thy ſoul is remote from God, the beams of his glory ſtrike it but obliquely and feebly, but ſhortly it will be under the line, and there the ſun ſhall ſtand ſtill, as it did in Gibeon; there ſhall be no cloudings, nor declinings of it. O how ſhould this fill thy ſoul with deſires of being uncloathed!

2. As for the enjoyment of ſaints, here indeed we have fellowſhip with them of the lower form; but that fellowſhip is ſo diſſweetened by remaining corruptions, that there is no ſatisfaction in it: as it is the greateſt plague that can befal an hypocrite to live in a pure church, ſo it is the greateſt vexation to the ſpirit of a ſaint, to live in a corrupt and diſordered church; but when death hath admitted you into that glorious aſſembly of the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, you ſhall have the deſire of your hearts; here you cannot fully cloſe with one another; yea, you cannot fully cloſe with your own ſouls. O what diſcords, jarrings, cenſurings are here? What perfect, bleſſed harmony there! In heaven each ſaint loves another as himſelf, they are altogether lovely. O my ſoul, haſte thee away from the lion's dens, from the mountains of Bether, from divided ſaints, to thoſe mountains of myrrh, and hills of frankincenſe: thou art now going unto thine own people, as the apoſtle's phraſe imports, 2 Cor. v. 8.

Arg. 6. If all this will not do, *Conſider what heavy burdens death will eaſe thy ſhoulders of.*

In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened, (1.) With bodily diſtempers; how true do we find that of Theophraſtus, The ſoul pays a dear rent for the tenement it now lives in? But glorified bodies are clogged with no indiſpoſitions; death is the beſt phyſician; it will cure thee of all diſeaſes at once. (2.) With the indwelling of ſin; this makes us groan from the very bowels, Rom. vii. 24. "But he that is dead, is free "from ſin," Rom. vi. 7. Hath juſtification deſtroyed its *damning power*, and ſanctification its *reigning power*? So glorifi-

cation deſtroys its very being and exiſtence. (3.) We groan under temptations here, but as ſoon as we are out of the body, we are out of the reach of temptation: when once thou art got into heaven, thou mayeſt ſay, Now Satan, I am there where thou canſt not come; for as the damned in hell are *malo obfirmati*, ſo fixed in ſin and miſery, that their condition cannot be altered; ſo glorified ſaints are *bono confirmati*, ſo fixed in holineſs and glory, that they cannot be ſhaken. (4.) Here we groan under various troubles, and afflictions, but then the days of our mourning are ended. God ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes. O then let us haſte away, that we may be at reſt.

Argument 7. If ſtill thou linger, like Lot in Sodom, then, *laſtly, examine all the pleas and pretences for a longer time on earth.* Why art thou unwilling to die?

Objection 1. O I have many relations in the world, I know not what will become of them when I am gone.

Solution. If thou art troubled about their bodies, and outward condition, why ſhould not that word ſatisfy thee, Jer. xlix. 11. Leave thy fatherleſs children to me, I will keep them "alive, and let thy widows truſt in me." Luther, in his laſt will and teſtament, hath this expreſſion, 'Lord, thou haſt given me wife and children, I have nothing to leave them, but 'I commit them unto thee. O Father of the fatherleſs, and 'judge of widows, *Nutri, ſerva, doce*; nouriſh, keep, and teach 'them.' Or, art thou troubled for their ſouls? Thou canſt not convert them, if thou ſhouldſt live, and God can make thy prayers and counſels to live, and take place upon them when thou art dead.

Objection 2. I would fain live to do God more ſervice in the world.

Solution. Well, but if he have no more ſervice for thee to do here, why ſhouldſt thou not ſay with David, "If he have "no delight to uſe me any farther, here am I, let him do what "ſeemeth him good." In this world thou haſt no more to do, but he is calling thee to an higher ſervice and employment in heaven; and what thou wouldſt do for him here, he can do that by other hands.

Objection 3. I am not yet fully ready, I am not as a bride, completely adorned for the bridegroom.

Solution. Thy juſtification is complete already, though thy ſanctification be not ſo; and the way to make it ſo, is to die; for till then it will have its defects, and wants.

Objection 4. O but I want assurance; if I had that, I could die presently.

Solution. Yea, there it sticks, indeed; but then consider, that an hearty willingness to leave all the world to be free from sin, and be with God, is the next way to that desired assurance; no carnal person was ever willing to die upon this ground.

And thus I have finished those cases which so nearly concern the people of God, in the several conditions of their life, and taught them how to keep their hearts in all. I shall next apply the whole.

I. *Use, of information.*

YOU have heard, that the keeping of the heart is the great work of a Christian, in which the very soul and life of religion consists, and without which all other duties are of no value with God: hence, then, I shall infer, to the consternation of hypocrites, and formal professors,

1. *That the pains and labours which many persons have taken in religion, are but lost labour and pains, to no purpose, such as will never turn to account.*

Many great services have been performed, many glorious works are wrought by men, which yet are utterly rejected by God, and shall never stand upon record, in order to an eternal acceptation, because they took no heed to keep their hearts with God in those duties: this is that fatal rock, upon which thousands of vain professors have split themselves eternally: they are curious about the externals of religion, but regardless of their hearts. O how many hours have some professors spent in hearing, praying, reading, conferring! and yet, as to the main end of religion, as good they had sat still, and done nothing; for all this signifies nothing, the great work, I mean heart-work, being all the while neglected. Tell me, thou vain professor, when didst thou shed a tear for the deadness, hardness, unbelief, or earthliness of thy heart? Thinkest thou such an easy religion can save thee? If so, we may invert Christ's words, and say, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the "way, that leadeth to life, and many there be that go in "thereat." Hear me, thou self-deluding hypocrite, thou that hast put off God with heartless duties, thou that hast acted in religion as if thou hadst been blessing an idol, that couldst not search and discover thy heart; thou that hast offered to God but the skin of the sacrifice, not the marrow, fat and inwards of

it; how wilt thou abide the coming of the Lord? How wilt thou hold up thy head before him, when he shall say, O thou dissembling, false-hearted man! how couldst thou profess religion? With what face couldst thou so often tell me that thou lovedst me, when thou knewest all the while, in thine own conscience, that thine heart was not with me? O tremble to think what a fearful judgment it is to be given over to a heedless, and careless heart; and then to have religious duties, instead of a rattle, to quiet and still the conscience!

2. Hence, also infer, for the *humiliation*, even of upright hearts, *That unless the people of God spend more time and pains about their hearts, than generally and ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much service, or be owners of much comfort in this world.*

I may say of that Christian that is remiss and careless in keeping his heart, as Jacob said of Reuben, "Thou shalt not excel." It grieves me to see how many Christians there are that go up and down dejected, and complaining, that live at a poor, low rate, both of service and comfort; and how can they expect it should be otherwise, as long as they live at such a careless rate? O how little of their time is spent in the closet, in searching, humbling, and quickening their hearts?

You say your hearts are dead, and do you wonder they are so, as long as you keep them not with the fountain of life? If your bodies had been dieted as your souls have been, they would have been dead too; never expect better hearts, till you take more pains with them: *Qui fugit molam, fugit farinam*; he that will not have the *sweet*, must not expect the *sweet* of religion.

O Christians! I fear your zeal and strength have run in the wrong channel; I fear most of us may take up the Church's complaint, Cant. i. 6. "They have made me the keeper of the "vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Two things have eaten up the time and strength of the professors of this generation, and sadly diverted them from heart-work: (1.) Fruitless controversies started by Satan, I doubt not, to this very purpose, to take us off from practical godliness, to make us puzzle our heads, when we should be searching our hearts. O how little have we minded that of the apostle, Heb. xiii. 9. "It is a good thing that the heart be established with "grace, and not with meats;" (*i. e.*) with disputes and controversies about meats, "which have not profited them that "have been occupied therein."

O how much better is it to see men *live exactly*, than to

hear them *dispute subtlely*! These unfruitful questions, how have they rended the churches, wasted time and spirits, and called Christians off from their main business, from looking to their own vineyard? What think ye, sirs? Had it not been better if the questions agitated among the people of God, of late days, had been such as these? How shall a man discern the special, from the common operations of the Spirit? How may a soul discern its first declinings from God? How may a backsliding Christian recover his first love? How may the heart be preserved from unseasonable thoughts in duty? How may a bosom sin be discovered, and mortified, *&c.* Would not this have tended more to the credit of religion, and comfort of your souls? O it is time to repent and be ashamed of this folly! When I read what Suarez, a Papist, said, who wrote many tomes of disputations, that he prized the time he set apart for the searching and examining of his heart, in reference to God, above all the time that ever he spent in other studies; I am ashamed to find the professors of this age, yet insensible of their folly. Shall the conscience of a Suarez feel a relenting pang for strength and time so ill employed, and shall not yours? This is it your ministers long since warned you of; your spiritual nurses were afraid of the rickets, when they saw your heads only to grow, and your hearts to wither. O when will God beat our swords into plow-shares! I mean, our disputes and contentions into practical godliness. (2.) Another cause of neglecting our hearts, hath been earthly incumbrances; the heads and hearts of many have been filled with such a crowd and noise of worldly business, that they have sadly and sensibly declined and withered in their zeal, love, and delight in God; in their heavenly, serious, and profitable way of conversing with man.

O how hath this wilderness entangled us! our discourses and conferences, nay, our very prayers and duties, have a tang of it: we have had so much work without doors, that we have been able to do but little within. It was the sad complaint of an holy one *, 'O (saith he) it is sad to think how many precious opportunities I have lost; how many sweet motions and admonitions of the Spirit I have passed over unfruitfully, and made the Lord to speak in vain: in the secret illapses of his Spirit the Lord hath called upon me, but my worldly thoughts did still lodge within me, and there was no place within my heart for such calls of God." Surely, there is a way of enjoying God, even in our worldly employments; God

* Mr. Strong.

would never have put us upon them to our loſs; "Enoch "walked with God, and begat ſons and daughters," Gen. v. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and ſeparate himſelf from the things of this life: and the angels, that are employed by Chriſt in the things of this world, (for the ſpirit of the living creatures is in the wheels) they are finite creatures, and cannot be in a twofold *ubi* at one time; yet they loſe nothing of the beatifical viſion, all the time of their adminiſtration; for Matth. xviii. 10. "Their angels (even whilſt they "are employed for them) behold the face of their Father which "is in heaven." We need not loſe our viſions by our employments, if the fault were not our own. Alas! that ever Chriſtians, who ſtand at the door of eternity, and have more work upon their hands than this poor moment of interpoſing time is ſufficient for, ſhould yet be filling both their heads and hearts with trifles.

3. Hence alſo I infer, for the *awakening* of all, *That if the keeping of the heart be the great work of a Chriſtian, then there are but few real Chriſtians in the world.*

Indeed if every one that hath learned the dialect of Chriſtianity, and can talk like a ſaint; if every one that hath gifts and parts, and by the common aſſiſting preſence of the Spirit can preach, pray, or diſcourſe like a Chriſtian; in a word, if ſuch as aſſociate themſelves with the people of God, and delight in ordinances, may paſs for Chriſtians, the number then is great.

But, alas! to what a ſmall number will they ſhrink, if you judge them by this rule! how few are there that make conſcience of keeping their hearts, watching their thoughts, judging their ends, *&c.* O there be but few cloſet men among profeſſors! It is far eaſier for men to be reconciled to any duties in religion than to theſe: The profane part of the world will not ſo much as touch with the outſide of religious duties, much leſs with this; and for the hypocrite, though he be polite and curious about thoſe externals, yet you can never perſuade him to this inward work, this difficult work, to which there is no inducement by human applauſe; this work, that would quickly diſcover what the hypocrite cares not to know; ſo that by a general conſent, this heart-work is left to the hands of a few ſecret ones, and I tremble to think in how few hands it is.

II. *Uſe, for exhortation.*

If the keeping of the heart be ſo important a buſineſs; if ſuch choice advantages accrue to you thereby; if ſo many dear and

precious intereſts be wrapt up in it, then let me call upon the people of God every where to fall cloſe to this work.

O ſtudy your hearts, watch your hearts, keep your hearts! away with fruitleſs controverſies, and all idle queſtions; away with empty names and vain ſhews; away with unprofitable diſcourſe and bold cenſures of others; turn in upon yourſelves; get into your cloſets, and now reſolve to dwell there. You have been ſtrangers to this work too long; you have kept others vineyards too long; you have trifled about the borders of religion too long; this world hath detained you from your great work too long; will you now reſolve to look better to your hearts? Will you haſte and come out of the crowds of buſineſs, and clamours of the world, and retire yourſelves more than you have done? O that this day you would reſolve upon it!

Reader, methinks I ſhould prevail with thee: All that I beg for is but this, that thou wouldſt ſtep aſide a little oftener to talk with God, and thine own heart; that thou wouldſt not ſuffer every trifle to divert thee; that thou wouldſt keep a more true and faithful account of thy thoughts and affections; that thou wouldſt but ſeriouſly demand of this thy own heart, at leaſt every evening, O my heart, where haſt thou been to-day? Whither haſt thou made a road to-day? If all that hath been ſaid by way of inducement be not enough, I have yet more motives to offer you. And the firſt is this:

1. Motive. *The ſtudying, obſerving, and diligent keeping of your own hearts, will marvellouſly help your underſtanding in the deep myſteries of religion.*

An honeſt well-experienced heart, is a ſingular help to a weak head; ſuch a heart will ſerve you inſtead of a *commentary* upon a great part of the ſcriptures: By this means you ſhall far better underſtand the things of God, than the learned Rabbies and profound doctors (if graceleſs and unexperienced) ever did; you ſhall not only have a more clear, but a more ſweet preception and guſt of them: A man may diſcourſe orthodoxly and profoundly of the nature and effects of faith, the troubles and comforts of conſcience, the ſweetneſs of communion with God, that never felt the efficacy and ſweet impreſſions of theſe things upon his own ſpirit: but O how dark and dry are theſe notions, compared with his upon whoſe heart they have been acted! When ſuch a man reads David's Pſalms, or Paul's epiſtles, there he finds his own objections made and anſwered. O, ſaith he, theſe holy men ſpeak my very heart: Their doubts were mine, their troubles mine, and their experiences mine. I remember Chryſoſtome, ſpeaking to his peo-

ple of Antioch about some choice experiences, used this expression: *Sciunt initiati quid dico:* Those that are initiated, know what I say: Experience is the best schoolmaster. O then, study your hearts, keep your hearts!

2 Motive. *The study and observation of your own hearts will antidote you against the dangerous and infecting errors of the times and places you live in.*

For what think you is the reason, that so many professors in England have departed from the faith, giving heed to fables; that so many thousands have been led away by the error of the wicked; that Jesuits and Quakers, who have sown corrupt doctrine, have had such plentiful harvests among us, but because they have met with a company of empty notional professors, that never knew what belongs to practical godliness, and the study of their own hearts.

If professors did but give diligence to study, search, and watch their own hearts, they would have that ἴδιον στηριγμὸν, that steadfastness of their own, that Peter speaks of, 1 Pet. iii. 17. and this would ballast and settle them, Heb. xiii. 9. Suppose a subtle Papist should talk to such, of the dignity and merit of good works; could he ever work the persuasion of it into that heart, that is conscious to itself of so much darkness, deadness, distraction, and unbelief, attending its best duties? It is a good rule, *Non est disputandum de gustu:* There is no disputing against taste. What a man hath felt and tasted, one cannot beat him off from that by argument.

3 Motive. *Your care and diligence in keeping your hearts, will prove one of the best evidences of your sincerity.*

I know no external act of religion that differences the sound from the unsound professor; it is wonderful to consider how far hypocrites go in all external duties; how plausibly they can order the outward man, hiding all their indecencies from the observations of the world.

But then, they take no heed to their hearts; they are not in secret what they appear to be in public: And before this trial no hypocrite can stand. It is confessed, they may in a fit, under a pang upon a death-bed, cry out of the wickedness of their hearts; but alas! there is no heed to be taken to these extorted complaints. In our law, no credit is to be given to the testimony of one upon the rack, because it may be supposed that the extremity of the torture may make him say any thing to be eased. But if self-jealousy, care, and watchfulness, be the daily workings and frames of thy heart, it strongly argues

the ſincerity of it: For what but the ſenſe of a divine eye; what but the real hatred of ſin as ſin, could put thee upon thoſe ſecret duties, which lie out of the obſervation of all creatures?

If then it be a deſireable thing in thine eyes, to have a fair teſtimony of thine integrity, and to know of a truth, that thou feareſt God; then ſtudy thine heart, watch thy heart, keep thy heart.

4 Motive. *How fruitful, ſweet, and comfortable would all ordinances and duties be to us, if our hearts were better kept?*

O what precious communion might you have with God, every time you approach him, if your hearts were but in frame! You might then ſay with David, Pſal. civ. 35. "My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet." That which loſes all our comforts in ordinances and more ſecret duties, is the indiſpoſedneſs of the heart: A Chriſtian whoſe heart is in a good frame, gets the ſtart of all others that come with him in that duty: They ſtrive hard to get up their hearts to God, now trying this argument upon them, and then that, to quicken and affect them, and ſometimes go away as bad as they came: Sometimes the duty is almoſt ended before their hearts begin to ſtir or feel any warmth, quickening, or power from it: But all this while the prepared heart is at its work; this is he that ordinarily gets the firſt ſight of Chriſt in a ſermon, the firſt ſeal from Chriſt in a ſacrament, the firſt kiſs from Chriſt in ſecret prayer. I tell you, and I tell you but what I have felt, that prayers and ſermons would appear to you other manner of things than they do, did you but bring better ordered hearts unto them; you would not go away dejected and drooping. O this hath been a loſt day, a loſt duty to me! if you had not loſt your hearts, it had not been ſo. If then the comfort of ordinances be ſweet, look to your hearts, keep your hearts.

5 Motive. *Acquaintance with your own hearts would be a fountain of matter to you in prayer.*

A man, that is diligent in heart-work, and knows the ſtate of his own ſoul, will have a fountain-fulneſs of matter to ſupply him richly in all his addreſſes to God; his tongue ſhall not faulter and make pauſe for want of matter; Pſal. xlv. 1. "My heart is inditing a good matter:" Or, as Montanus renders the original, my heart is boiling up good matter, like a living ſpring, that is ſtill bubbling up freſh water; and then my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer: Others muſt pump their memories, rack their inventions, and are often at a loſs, when they have done all; but if thou have kept, and faithfully ſtudied

thine own heart, it will be with thee (as Job ſpeaks in another caſe) like bottles full of new wine, that want vent, which are ready to burſt: As holy matter flows plentifully, ſo more feelingly and ſweetly from ſuch a heart. When a heart-experienced Chriſtian is mourning before God over ſome ſpecial heart-corruption, wreſtling with God for the ſupply of ſome ſecialp inward want, he ſpeaks not as other men do, that have learned to pray by rote; their confeſſions and petitions are ſqueezed out; his drop freely, like pure honey from the comb: It is a happineſs then to be with or near ſuch a Chriſtian. I remember Bernard, having given rules to prepare the heart for prayer, concludes them thus, *Et cum talis fueris, memento mei;* and (ſaith he) When thy heart is in this frame, then remember me.

6 Motive. *By this the decayed power of religion will be recovered again among profeſſors, which is the moſt deſireable ſight in this world.*

O that I might live to ſee that day, when profeſſors ſhall not walk in a vain ſhew, when they ſhall pleaſe themſelves no more with a name to live, being ſpiritually dead! When they ſhall be no more (as many of them now are) a company of frothy, vain, and unſerious perſons, but the majeſtic beams of holineſs ſhining from their heavenly and ſerious converſations, ſhall awe the world, and command reverence from all that are about them; when they ſhall warm the hearts of thoſe that come nigh them, ſo that men ſhall ſay, God is in theſe men of a truth.

Well, ſuch a time may again be expected, according to that promiſe, Iſa. lx. 21. "The people ſhall be all righteous." But till we purſue cloſer to this great work of keeping our hearts, I am out of hopes to ſee thoſe bleſſed days; I cannot expect better times, till God gives better hearts. Doth it not grieve you to ſee what a ſcorn religion is made in the world? what objects of contempt and ſcorn the profeſſors of it are made in the world?

Profeſſors, Would you recover your credit? Would you again obtain an honourable teſtimony in the conſciences of your very enemies? Then, keep your hearts, watch your hearts: it is the looſeneſs, frothineſs, and earthlineſs of your hearts that hath made your lives ſo; and this hath brought you under the contempt of the world; you firſt loſt your ſights of God, and communion with him, then your heavenly and ſerious deportment among men, and by that, your intereſt in their

consciences: O then, for the credit of religion, for the honour of your profession keep your hearts!

7 Motive. *By diligence in keeping our hearts, we should prevent, and remove the fatal scandals and stumbling-blocks out of the way of the world.*

"Woe to the world (saith Christ) because of offences!" Matth. xviii. 7. Doth not shame cover your faces? Do not your hearts bleed within you, to hear of the scandalous miscarriages of many loose professors? Could you not, like Shem and Japhet, go backward with a garment to cover the shame of many professors? How is that worthy name blasphemed! Jam. ii. 7. 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14. the hearts of the righteous sadened, Psal xxv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 20. by this the world is fearfully prejudiced against Christ and religion, the bonds of death made fast upon their souls; those that have a general love and liking to the ways of God, startled and quite driven back, and thus soul-blood is shed: woe to the world!

Yea, how are the consciences of fallen professors plunged, and even overwhelmed in the deeps of trouble? God inwardly excommunicating their souls from all comfortable fellowship with himself, and the joys of his salvation; infinite are the mischiefs that come by the scandalous lives of professors.

And what is the true cause and reason of all this, but the neglecting of their hearts? Were our hearts better kept, all this would be prevented. Had David kept his heart, he had not broken his bones: a negligent and careless heart must of necessity produce a disorderly and scandalous life. I thank God for the freedom and faithfulness of a * reverend brother, in shewing professors their manifold miscarriages; and from my heart do wish, that when their wounds have been thoroughly searched by that probe, God would be pleased to heal them by this plaister. O professors! if ever you will keep religion sweet; if ever you hope to recover the credit of it in the world, keep your hearts; either keep your hearts, or lose your credit; keep your hearts, or lose your comforts: keep your hearts, lest ye shed soul-blood. What words can express the deep concernments, the wonderful consequences of this work! Every thing puts a necessity, a solemnity, a beauty upon it.

8 Motive. *An heart well kept will fit you for any condition, God casts you into, or any service he hath to use you in.*

He that hath learnt how to keep his heart lowly, is fit for prosperity; and he that knows how to use and apply it to scrip-

* Gospel-Glass.

tuse promises, and supports, is fit to pass through any adversity: he that can deny the pride and selfishness of his heart, is fit to be employed in any service for God. Such a man was Paul, he did not only spend his time in preaching to others, in keeping others vineyards, but he looked to himself, kept his own vineyard; 1 Cor. ix. 27. "Lest when I have preached to "others, I myself should be a cast-away." And what an eminent instrument was he for God? He could turn his hand to any work; he could dexterously manage both an adverse and prosperous condition: "I know how to abound, and how to "suffer want. Let the people deify him it moves him not, unless to indignation. Let them stone him, he can bear it; If "a man purge himself from these (saith he," 2 Tim. ii. 21.) "he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the "master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

First, The heart must be purged and then it is prepared for any service of God. When the heart of Isaiah was purified, which was the thing signified by the touching of his lips with a coal from the altar, Isa. vi. 7. then he was fit for God's work: "Here am I, send me," ver. 8. A man that hath not learned to keep his heart, put him upon any service for God, and if it be attended with honour, it shall swell up and over-top his spirit; if with suffering, it will exanimate and sink him.

Jesus Christ had an instrumental fitness for his Father's work above all the servants that ever God employed: he was zealous in public work for God; so zealous, that sometimes he forgot to eat bread, yea, that his friends thought he had been besides himself: but yet he so carried on his public work, as not to forget his own private communion with God: and therefore you read, Matth. xiii. 23. that when he had been labouring all day, yet, after that he went up to a mountain apart to pray, and was there alone. O let the keepers of the vineyards look to their own vineyard: We shall never be so instrumental to the good of others, as when we are most diligent about our own souls.

9 Motive. *If the people of God would more diligently keep their hearts, how exceedingly would the communion of saints be thereby sweetened.*

How goodly then would be thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! Then it is prophesied of the Jews, Zech. viii. 23. "Men would say, we will go with you; for we have "heard that God is among you." It is the fellowship your souls have with the Father, and with the Son, that draws out the desires of others after fellowship with you, 1 John i. 3. I tell you,

if ſaints would be perſuaded to take more pains, and ſpend more time about their hearts, there would quickly be ſuch a divine luſtre upon the face of their converſations, that men would account it no ſmall privilege to be with or near them.

It is the pride, paſſion, and earthlineſs of our hearts that have ſpoiled Chriſtian fellowſhip. Whence is it, that when Chriſtians meet, they are often jarring and contending? but only from their unmortified paſſions: whence are their uncharitable cenſures of their brethren? but only from ſelf-ignorance: Why are they ſo rigid and unmerciful towards thoſe that are fallen? but becauſe they conſider not themſelves, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Gal. vi. 1. Why is their diſcourſe ſo frothy and unprofitable when they meet? is not this from the earthlineſs and vanity of their hearts?

My brethren, theſe be the things that have ſpoiled Chriſtian fellowſhip, and made it become a dry and ſapleſs thing; ſo that many Chriſtians are even weary of it, and are ready to ſay with the prophet, Jer. ix. 2. "O that I had a cottage in the "wilderneſs, *&c.* that I might leave my people and go from "them!" And with David, Pſalm cxx. 6. "My ſoul hath "long dwelt with them that hate peace." This hath made them long for the grave that they might go from them that are not their own people, to them that are their own people, as the original of that text imports, 2 Cor. v. 8.

But now if profeſſors would ſtudy their own hearts more, watch and keep them better, all this would be prevented; and the beauty and glory of communion again reſtored: they would divide no more, contend no more, cenſure raſhly no more; when their hearts are in tune, their tongues will not jar; how charitable, pitiful and tender will they be of one another, when every one is daily humbled under the evils of his own heart. Lord, haſten thoſe much-deſired days, and bleſs theſe counſels in order to them!

10 Motive, Laſtly, *By this the comforts of the Spirit, and precious influence of all ordinances, would be fixed, and much longer preſerved in your ſouls than now they are.*

Ah! what would I give, that my ſoul might be preſerved in that frame I ſometimes find it after an ordinance? *Aliquando intromittis me, Domine, in affectum multum inuſitatum, introrſus ad quam neſcio dulcedinem*, &c. Sometimes, O Lord, (ſaith one of the Fathers ſweetly) thou admitteſt me into the moſt inward, unuſual and ſweet delights, to I know-not-what ſweetneſs, which were it perfected in me, I know not what it

would be, or rather, what it would not be. But, alas! the heart grows careleſs again, and quickly returns, like water removed from the fire, to its native coldneſs. Could you but keep thoſe things for ever in your hearts, what Chriſtians would you be, what lives would you live? and how is it that theſe things remain no longer with us? Doubtleſs it is becauſe we ſuffer our hearts to take cold again; we ſhould be as careful after an ordinance or duty, to prevent this, as one that comes out of a hot bath, or great ſweat, is of going out into the chill air. We have our hot and cold fits by turns; and what is the reaſon, but our unſkilfulneſs and careleſſneſs in keeping the heart?

It is a thouſand pities, that the ordinances of God, as to their quickening and comforting effects, ſhould be like thoſe human ordinances the apoſtle ſpeaks of, that periſh in the uſing. O then, let me ſay to you, as Job xv. 11. "Do the conſolations of God ſeem ſmall to you?" Look over theſe ten ſpecial benefits; weigh them in a juſt balance; are they ſmall matters? Is it a ſmall matter to have thy weak underſtanding aſſiſted? Thy endangered ſoul antidoted, thy ſincerity cleared, thy communion with God ſweetened, thy fails filled in prayer? Is it a ſmall thing to have the decayed power of godlineſs again recovered, all fatal ſcandals removed, an inſtrumental fitneſs to ſerve Chriſt obtained, the communion of ſaints reſtored to its primitive glory, and the influences of ordinances abiding in the ſouls of ſaints? If theſe be no common bleſſings, no ſmall benefits, then, ſurely, it is a great duty to keep the heart with all diligence.

The III. *Uſe for direction.*

The next uſe ſhall be for direction to ſome ſpecial means for the keeping of the heart. And here, beſides what hath been hinted in the explication of the duty *at the beginning of this diſcourſe*, to which I refer the reader, and all thoſe directions throughout the whole, appropriated to particular caſes and ſeaſons; I ſhall farther add ſeveral other general means of excellent uſe to this end. And the firſt is this:

1 Means. *Would you thus keep your hearts as hath been perſuaded? Then furniſh your hearts richly with the word of God, which is their beſt preſervative againſt ſin.*

Keep the word, and the word will keep you: as the firſt receiving of the word regenerated your hearts, ſo the keeping of the word within you will preſerve your hearts: Col. iii. 16. "Let the word of Chriſt dwell richly in you:" let it dwell, not tarry with you for a night, and let it dwell richly or plen-

tifully; in all that is of it, in its commands, promiſes, threats; in all that is in you, in your underſtanding, memories, conſciences, affections, and then it will preſerve your hearts; Pſalm cxix. 11. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I "might not ſin againſt thee." It is the ſlipperineſs of our hearts in reference to the word, that cauſes ſo many ſlips in our lives. Conſcience cannot be urged or awed with forgotten truths; but keep it in the heart, and it will keep both heart and life upright; Pſalm xxxvii. 31. "The law of his God is "in his heart: none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide;" or if he do, the word will recover the ſtraying heart again; Matth. xxvi. 57. "Then Peter remembered the words of Jeſus, and wept "bitterly." We never loſe our hearts, till they have firſt loſt the efficaciousand powerful impreſſion of the word.

2 Means. *Call your hearts frequently to an account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.*

Thoſe that put a ſtock into the hands of unfaithful or ſuſpicious ſervants, will be ſure to make ſhort reckonings with them; "The heart is deceitful, above all things, and deſperately wick-"ed," Jer. xvii. 9. O it is as neceſſary as ſweet, that we and our reins, that is, we and our ſecret thoughts, ſhould confer together every night, Pſalm xvi. 7. We ſhould call our hearts to account every evening, and ſay, O my heart! Where haſt thou been to day? Where have thy thoughts been wandering to day? What an account canſt thou give of them? O naughty heart! vain heart! couldſt thou not abide by the fountain of delights? Is there better entertainment with the creature than with God? The oftner the heart meets with rebukes and checks for wandering, the leſs it will wander: If every vain thought were retracted with a ſigh, every excurſion of the heart from God with a ſevere check, it would not dare ſo boldly and frequently to digreſs and ſtep aſide; thoſe actions which are committed with reluctancy, are not committed with frequency.

3 Means. *He that will keep his heart, muſt take heed of plunging himſelf into ſuch a multiplicity of earthly buſineſs, as he cannot manage without neglecting his main buſineſs.*

It cannot be imagined he ſhould keep his heart with God, that hath loſt himſelf in a wood of earthly buſineſs: Take heed you do not pinch your ſouls, by gratifying the immoderate deſires of your fleſh. I wiſh many Chriſtians could truly ſay what an * heathen once did! "I do not give, but only lend my-

* Seneca.

'self to business.' It is said Germanicus reigned in the Romans hearts; Tiberius only in their provinces. Though the world be in your hands, let it not justle Christ out of your hearts.

Take heed, Christian, lest thy shop steal away thy heart from thy closet; God never intended earthly employments for a stop, but rather for a step to heavenly ones. O let not Aristippus the heathen, arise in judgment against thee, who said, 'He would rather neglect his means, than his mind; his farm, than his soul.' If thy ship be overladen, thou must cast some over-board: More business than thou canst well manage, is like more meat than thou canst well digest, which will quickly make a sickly soul.

4 Means. *He that means to keep his heart, must carefully observe its first declinings from God, and stop it there.*

He that will find his house in good repair, must stop every chink as soon as discoverd; and he that will keep his heart, must not let a vain thought be long neglected; the serpent of heart-apostacy is best killed in the egg of a small remission. Oh! if many poor decayed Christians had looked to their hearts in time, they had never come to that sad pass they now are? We may say of heart-neglects, as the apostle doth of vain babblings; that they increase to more and more ungodliness. *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*; little sins neglected, will quickly become great and masterless: The greatest *crocodile* once lay in an egg; the greatest *oak* was once but an acorn. The firing of a small train of powder may blow up all, by leading to a greater quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain wanton, or worldly thought may grow to: Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!

5 Means. *Take heed of losing the liveliness and sweetness of your communion with God, lest thereby your hearts be loosed off from God.*

The heart is an hungry and restless thing; it will have something to feed upon; if it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for something among the creatures, and there it often loses itself, as well as its end. There is nothing more engages the heart to a constancy and evenness in walking with God, than the sweetness which it tastes therein: As the Gauls, when once they tasted the sweet wine of Italy, could never be satisfied till they conquered the country where it grew.

It is true, conscience of duty may keep the heart from neglecting it; but when there is no higher motive, it drives on deadly, and is filled with distractions; that which we delight

in, we are never weary of, as is evident in the motions of the heart to earthly things, where the wheels being oiled with delight, run nimbly, and have often need of trigging; the motions of the heart upward would be as free, if its delight in heavenly things were as great.

6 Means. *Habituate thy heart to ſpiritual meditations, if thou wouldſt have it free from thoſe burdenſome diverſions.*

By this means you will get a facility and dexterity in heart-work: It is pity thoſe ſmaller portions of our time betwixt ſolemn duties ſhould lie upon our hands, and be rendered uſeleſs to us. O learn to ſave, and be good huſbands upon your thoughts. To this purpoſe a neat author * ſpeaks; 'Theſe 'parentheſes, which happen to come between the more ſolemn 'paſſages (whether buſineſs or recreations) of human life, are 'wont to be loſt by moſt men for want of a due value for 'them, and even by good men, for want of ſkill to preſerve 'them; for though they do not properly deſpiſe them, yet 'they neglect, or loſe them, for want of knowing how to re-'ſcue them, or what to do with them: But although grains 'of ſand and aſhes be, apart, but of a deſpicable ſmallneſs, and 'liable to be ſcattered and blown away, yet the ſkilful artifi-'cer, by a vehement fire, brings numbers of thoſe to afford 'him that noble ſubſtance, glaſs, by whoſe help we may both 'ſee ourſelves, and our blemiſhes lively repreſented (as in 'looking-glaſſes) and diſcern celeſtial objects (as with the teleſ-'copes) and with the ſun beams kindle diſpoſed materials (as 'with burning-glaſſes): So when theſe little fragments, or 'parcels of time, which if not carefully looked to, would be 'diſſipated and loſt, come to be managed by a ſkilful con-'templator, and to be improved by the celeſtial fire of devo-'tion, they may be ſo ordered as to afford us both looking-'glaſſes to dreſs our ſouls by, and proſpectives to diſcover 'heavenly wonders and incentives to inflame our hearts with 'zeal:' Thus far he,

Something of that nature I have under hand, for a public benefit, if God give life to finiſh, and opportunity to produce it: Certainly this is a great advantage for the keeping of the heart with God.

IV. *Uſe of conſolation.*

I ſhall now cloſe the whole with a word or two of conſolation to all diligent and ſerious Chriſtians, that faithfully and cloſely ply heart-work; that are groaning and weeping in ſecret

* Boyle's occaſional reflect. p. 9. 10.

over the hardneſs, pride, earthlineſs, and vanity of their hearts; that are fearing and trembling over the experienced deceitfulneſs and falſeneſs of them, whilſt other vain profeſſors eyes are abroad, their time and ſtrength eaten up by fruitleſs diſputes and earthly employments, or, at beſt, by a cold and formal performance of ſome heartleſs and empty duties. Poor Chriſtian! I have three things to offer thee, in order to thy ſupport and comfort; and, doubtleſs, either of them alone, mixed with faith, is ſufficient to comfort thee over all the trouble thou haſt with thine own heart.

1 Comfort. *This argues thy heart to be upright and honeſt, whatever thy gifts and abilites are.*

It is uprightneſs of heart will comfort thee upon a death-bed; 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. "Then he turned his face to the wall, "and prayed to the Lord, ſaying, remember now, O Lord, "how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect "heart," *&c.*

I am really of his mind, who ſaid, *ſi mihi daretur optio, eligerem Chriſtiani ruſtici ſordidiſſimum & maxime agreſte opus prae omnibus victoriis & triumphis Alexandri aut Caeſaris*; might I have my wiſh, I would prefer the moſt deſpicable and ſordid work of a ruſtic Chriſtian, before all the victories and triumphs of Alexander or Caeſar; yea, let me add, before all the elaborated duties and excellent gifts of vain profeſſors; before the tongues of men and angels. It will ſignify more to my comfort, to ſpend one ſolitary hour in mourning before the Lord over heart-corruption, than many hours in a ſeeming zealous, but really dead performance of common duties with the greateſt enlargements and richeſt embelliſhments of parts and gifts.

By this very thing Chriſt diſtinguiſhes the formal and ſerious Chriſtian, Matth. vi. 5. The one is for the ſtreet and ſynagogue, for the obſervation and applauſe of men, but the other is a cloſet-man. he drives on a home-trade a heart-trade. Never be troubled then for the want of thoſe things that a man may have and be eternally damned; but rather bleſs God for that which none but the favourites and darlings of heaven have. Many a one is now in hell that had a better head than thine; and many a one now in heaven that complained of as bad a heart as thine.

2 Comfort. *Know further for thy comfort, that God would never leave thee under ſo many heart-troubles and burdens if he intend not thy real benefit thereby.*

Thou art often crying out, Lord! why is it thus? Why go I mourning all the day, having sorrow in my heart? Thus long have I been exercised with hardness of heart, and to this day have not obtained a broken heart. Many years have I been praying and striving against vain thoughts, yet am still infested and perplexed with them. O when shall I get a better heart! I have been in travail, and brought forth but wind; I have obtained, no deliverance, neither have the corruptions of my heart fallen. I have brought this heart many times to prayers, sermons and sacraments, expecting and hoping for a cure from them, and still my sore runneth, and ceaseth not.

Pensive soul! Let this comfort thee; thy God designs thy benefit, even by these occasions of thy sad complaints. For (1.) Hereby he would let thee see what thy heart by nature is and was, and therein take notice how much thou art beholding to free grace. He leaves thee under these exercises of spirit, that thou mayst lie, as with thy face, upon the ground, admiring that ever the Lord of glory should take so vile a creature into his bosom. Thy base heart, if it be good for nothing else, yet serves to commend and set off the unsearchable riches of free grace. (2.) This serves to beat thee off continually from resting, yea, or but glancing upon thine own righteousness or excellency. The corruption of thy heart, working in all thy duties, makes thee sensibly to feel that the bed is too short, and the covering too narrow. Were it not for those reflections thou hast after duties, upon the dulness and distractions of thine heart in them; how apt wouldst thou be to fall in love with, and admire thine own performances and enlargements? For if notwithstanding these, thou hast much to do with the pride of thy heart, how much more; if such humbling and self-abasing considerations were wanting. And, lastly, this tends to make thee the more compassionate and tender towards others: Perhaps thou wouldst have little pity for the distresses and soul-troubles of others, if thou hadst less experience of thine own.

3 Comfort. *To conclude; God will shortly put a blessed end to all these troubles, cares and watchings.*

The time is coming, when thy heart shall be as thou wouldst have it; when thou shalt be discharged of all these cares, fears, and sorrows, and never cry out, O my hard, my proud, my vain, my earthly heart any more! When all darkness shall be banished from thine understanding; and thou shalt clearly discover all truths in God, that crystal ocean of truth: When

all vanity shall be purged perfectly out of thy thoughts, and they be everlastingly, ravishingly, and delightfully entertained and exercised upon that supreme goodness, and infinite excellency of God, from whom they shall never start any more like a broken bow. And as for thy pride, passion, earthliness, and all other the matters of thy complaint and trouble, it shall be said of them, as of the Egyptians to Israel, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God." These corruptions thou seest to day, henceforth thou shalt see them no more for ever! when thou shalt lay down thy weapons of prayers, tears, and groans, and put on the armour of light, not to fight, but triumph in.

Lord! when shall this blessed day come? How long! how long! holy and true? My soul waiteth for thee! Come, my Beloved! and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. *Amen.*

THE TOUCHSTONE OF SINCERITY,

OR,

The signs of GRACE, and Symptoms of HYPOCRISY. Opened in a practical Treatise upon Revelation iii. 17, 18.

The Epistle to the Reader.

Reader,

AMONG the difficulties and severities of true religion, the faithful searching, and diligent keeping of our hearts are found in the first and highest rank of difficulties: These two take up the main work of a Christian betwixt them, *Hic labor, hoc opus est.* I had hopes that these *essays* for the *searching of the heart*, might much sooner have followed my former for *keeping the heart* *: But providence hath reserved it for the fittest season.

It comes to thy hand, Reader, in a day of straits and fears, a dark and gloomy season; when the nations about us are made

* A Saint indeed.

drunk with their own blood, and filled with the wine of aſtoniſhment? in a day when the cup is ready to paſs unto us, and a ſtorm ſeems to be riſing in the fears of many, and threatening the *proteſtant* intereſt in theſe reformed nations. Some men, very conſiderable for piety and learning, from that ſcripture, Rev. xiii. 3. "The deadly wound," (*viz.* That given the beaſt by the reformation) *was healed*, have concluded, that Popery will once more over-run the reformed nations: And one of great renown in all the churches of Chriſt, foretelling this furious, but ſhort ſtorm, comforts the people of God with this, That it is like to fall heavieſt upon the worſhippers in the *outward court*, namely the formal profeſſors of the times.

O how much is every man now concerned to have his eſtate and condition well cleared, and to give all diligence to make his calling and election ſure!

It ſhould both amaze and grieve a pious mind, to ſee how ſome ingenious perſons can ſit with unwearied patience and pleaſure, racking their brains upon ſome dry *ſchool problem*, or ſome nice *mathematical point*; whilſt no reaſons or perſuaſions can prevail with them to ſpend one ſerious hour in the ſearch and ſtudy of their own hearts!

It was the ſaying of the great Cicero, *Libenter omnibus omnes opes conceſſerim, ut mihi liceat, vi nullâ interpellante, iſto modo literis vivere:* I would give all the wealth in the world that I might wholly live in my ſtudies, and have nothing to hinder me. What a brave offer had that been, if heaven, and the clearing of a title to it, had been the ſubject-matter of thoſe ſtudies! *Crede mihi, extingui dulce eſſet, mathematicarum artium ſtudio*, ſaith another; *i. e.* Believe me, it were a ſweet death to die in the ſtudy of the *mathematical arts*: And I ſhould be apt to believe it too, did I not know that eternal judgment immediately follows death; and that they who ſtand at the door of eternity have higher matters to mind than *mathematical niceties*. To diſcern the harmonies and proportions in nature is pleaſant; but, to diſcern the harmony and proportion of the *ſigns* of grace laid down in the word, with the works of grace wrought in our *ſouls*, is a far more pleaſant and neceſſary employment; and, to be extinguiſhed in ſuch a work as this, were a lovely death indeed; "Bleſſed "is that ſervant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find "ſo doing!"

My friends, a day of trouble is near, a dying hour approacheth us; and when our eye-ſtrings and heart-ſtrings are breaking; when we are taking the laſt graſp of Chriſt, and the pro-

miſes, you will then know to what purpoſe thoſe hours ſpent in ſuch work as this were. Search yourſelves, yea, ſearch yourſelves before the decree bring forth, as that text may be read, Zeph. ii. 1, 2. "Enter into thy chamber, Chriſtian, "and ſhut thy door;" 'ſit cloſe to this employment thou art 'here directed to; and however times ſhall govern, whether 'it be fair or foul weather abroad, thou ſhalt never repent 'ſuch an expence of thy time.' *Nuſquam requiem inveni, niſi in libro, & clauſtro*, ſaid a devout ſoul once; I am never better than when I am at my book, or on my knees.

This may ſeem but a dull, melancholy life to the briſk and airy ſpirits of theſe times; but let us be content with it as it is, and leave them (if we cannot have their company) to their ſportiveneſs and frolics, never once grudging them their ſhort and dear-bought pleaſures. Aſſurance, That ſin is pardoned, and Chriſt is ours, with the unſpeakable joys that are inſeparably connected therewith, is that "white ſtone, and new name, "which none knows but he that receives it;" for no words can poſſibly ſignify to another what that ſoul taſtes and feels in ſuch an hour as that is.

And be not diſcouraged at the difficulty of obtaining it: This *white ſtone* is no *philoſopher ſtone*, which no man could ever ſay he had in his own hand; for many a Chriſtian hath really found it in waiting upon the Lord by prayer, and diligently ſearching the ſcriptures and his own heart.

Reader, the time will come when they that ſcoff at the ſerious diligence of the ſaints, and break many a pleaſant jeſt upon the moſt ſolemn and awful things in religion, will tremble when they ſhall hear the midnight-cry, "Behold the bride-"groom cometh!" and ſee the lamps of all vain and formal profeſſors expire, and none admitted into the marriage but ſuch whoſe lamps are furniſhed with oil; *i. e.* ſuch whoſe profeſſions and duties are enlivened and maintained by vital ſprings and principles of real grace within them.

It is a very remarkable ſtory that Melchior Adams records in the life of Gobelinus; that a little before his time there was a play ſet forth at Iſenach in Germany, of the *wiſe* and *fooliſh virgins*, wherein the virgin Mary, who was one of the five ſaints that repreſented the wiſe virgins, was brought in with the reſt, telling the *fooliſh virgins*, that cried to her for oil, that it was too late: and then others repreſenting the *fooliſh virgins*, fell a weeping, and making moſt bitter lamentations.

Hereat prince Frederic (who was one of the ſpectators) greatly amazed, cried out, *Quid eſt fides noſtra Chriſtiana, ſi*

neque Maria, neque alia Sancta exorari poteſt! &c. What is our faith worth, and to what purpoſe are all our good works, if neither Mary, nor any other ſaint can help us! And ſuch was his conſternation, that it threw him into a ſore and violent diſeaſe which ended in an apoplex, whereof he died about four days after.

If the repreſentation of theſe things in a play, ended the life of ſo great a man ſo tragically; O think with thyſelf, Reader, and what will the effects of the Lord's real appearance in the clouds of heaven, and the mourning and wailing of the tribes of the earth in that day be! Think I ſay, and think again, and again, what the diſmal effects of ſuch a ſight and ſound will be upon all that neglect ſerious preparation themſelves, and ſcoff at them that do prepare to meet the Lord!

The deſign of this manual is to bring every man's gold to the touchſtone and fire; I mean every man's grace to the trial of the word; that thereby we may know what we are, what we have, and what we muſt expect and truſt to at the Lord's coming. I pretend not to any gift of *diſcerning ſpirits*; ſuch an extraordinary gift there once was in the church, and very neceſſary for thoſe times (wherein Satan was ſo buſy, and the *canon* of ſcripture not completed) which the apoſtle calls the gift of *diſcerning ſpirits*, 1 Cor. xii. 10. And ſome are of opinion, that by virtue of this gift, Peter diſcerned the hypocriſy of Ananias and Saphira, but whatever that gift was, it is utterly ceaſed now; no man can pretend to it; But the ordinary aids and aſſiſtances of the Spirit are with us ſtill, and the lively oracles are among us ſtill; to them we may freely go for reſolution of all doubts, and deciſion of perplexed caſes. And thus we may diſcern our own ſpirits, though we want the extraordinary gift of diſcerning other men's ſpirits.

I have little to ſay of this *Treatiſe* in thy hands, more than that it is well aimed and deſigned, however it be managed. The ear tries words, as the mouth taſteth meat; theſe things will reliſh according to the palates it meets with.

It is not the pleaſing, but profiting of men, that I have herein laboured for. I know of nothing in it that is like to wound the upright, or ſlightly heal the hypocrite, by crying peace, peace, when there is no peace. Scripture light hath been my Cynoſura; and with that thread in my hand, I have followed the ſearch of hypocriſy through the labyrinths of the heart. Some aſſiſtance I hope I have had alſo from experience; for ſcripture and experience are ſuch relatives, and the tie betwixt them ſo diſcernible, as nothing in nature can be more ſo. What

we feel in our hearts, we might have read in the scriptures before ever we felt it.

That the blessing of God may go forth with it, and accompany it to thy soul, reader, is the heart's desire and prayer of,

Thine, and the Church's
Servant in CHRIST,
JOHN FLAVEL.

THE TOUCHSTONE OF SINCERITY:

OR,

The Signs of GRACE, and Symptoms of HYPOCRISY: Opened in a Treatise upon Revelation iii. 17, 18.

Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me GOLD TRIED in the FIRE, that thou mayest be rich, &c.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the text is opened, and the doctrines are propounded.

ALthough the Revelation be a *compendium* of intricate visions, and obscure prophecies, containing almost as many mysteries as words *; yet that cloud overshadows the prophetical part only; which begins where this chapter (with the doctrinal part) ends: here the waters are found no deeper than in other places of the Scripture; but if we go a little farther, they become an overflowing flood: Hitherto we touch

* *Tot mysteria quot verba.* Hieron.

ground, but a ſtep further delivers us into the deeps, which are above the heads of the talleſt Chriſtians: Here the Spirit ſpeaks *doctrinally*, and perſpicuouſly; but in the following chapters *myſtically*, and in great obſcurity.

Seven epiſtles are found in this doctrinal part, immediately dictated from heaven, and ſent by John to the *ſeven churches of Aſia*, to inſtruct, correct, encourage, and confirm them, as their ſeveral caſes required.

My text falls in the laſt *epiſtle*, ſent to the church of Laodicea; the worſt and moſt degenerate of all the reſt. The beſt had their defects and infirmities, but this laboured under the moſt dangerous diſeaſe of all. The faireſt face of the ſeven had ſome *ſpots*, but a dangerous diſeaſe ſeems to have invaded the very heart of this.

Not that all were equally guilty, but the greateſt part (from which the whole is denominated) were *lukewarm* profeſſors; who had a name to live, but were dead; who being never thoroughly engaged in religion, eaſily embraced that principle of the Gnoſtics, which made it ἀδιαφορον, a matter of indifferency to own or deny Chriſt in time of perſecution; the moſt ſaving doctrine that ſome profeſſors are acquainted with. This lukewarm temper Chriſt hated; he was ſick of them, and loathed their indifferency; "I wiſh (ſaith he) ver. 16. thou wert ei-"ther cold or hot." An expreſſion of the ſame amount with that in 1 Kings xviii. 21. "How long halt you between two "opinions?" and is manifeſtly tranſlated from the qualities of water *, which is either *cold* or *hot*; or *lukewarm*, a middle temper betwixt both, and more nauſeous to the ſtomach than either of the former. 'Cold, is the complection and natural tem-'per of thoſe that are wholly alienated and eſtranged from Chriſt 'and religion: *Hot*, is the gracious temper of thoſe that know 'and love Jeſus Chriſt in an excelling degree! *lukewarm*, or '*tepid*, is the temper of thoſe who have too much religion to 'be eſteemed carnal, and too little to be truly ſpiritual;' a generation that is too *politic*, to venture much, and yet ſo *fooliſh* as to loſe all; they are loath to forſake truth *wholly*, and more loath to follow it too *cloſely*: the form of religion they affect as an *honour*, the power of it they judge a *burden*.

* *Frigidos vocat plane a Chriſto alienos. Fervidos, vera Chriſti cognitione in excellenti gradu præditos. Tepidos, qui cum Chriſtiani dici velint, nec cauſam religionis ſerio agunt, nec vitam confeſſioni conformem dignamque ducunt*, Sol. Glaſſ. Rhet. Sacra. par. 3. p. 165.

This is that temper which the Lord hates, and this was the diſeaſe of Laodicea, which Chriſt, the great and only *heart-anatomiſt* and *ſoul-phyſician*, diſcovers in ver. 17. and preſcribes a cure for it in ver. 18. So that the words reſolve themſelves into two parts; *viz.*

Firſt, A faithful diſcovery } of the diſeaſe of Laodicea.
Secondly, A proper remedy }

1. *Firſt*, Their diſeaſe is faithfully diſcovered to them, both in its ſymptoms, cauſe and aggravations.

Firſt, Its *ſymptoms*, an unconcerned, indifferent, regardleſs ſpirit in matters of religion, neither hot, nor cold; the true temper of *formal-profeſſors*, who never engaged themſelves thoroughly and heartily in the ways of God, but can take or leave as times govern, and worldly intereſt come to be concerned.

Secondly, Its cauſe and root, which is the defect and want of the truth, and power of inward grace, noted in theſe expreſſions, "Thou art wretched, and miſerable, poor, blind, "and naked;" *i. e.* thou art deſtitute of a real principle, a ſolid work of grace. Theſe five epithets do all point at one and the ſame thing; namely, the defective and rottenneſs of their foundation. The two firſt, ὁ ταλαιπωρος και ὁ ἐλεεινος, *wretched* and *miſerable* are more general, concluding them in a ſad condition, a very ſinful and lamentable eſtate; the three laſt, πτωχος, τυφλος, και γυμνος, viz. *poor*, *blind*, and *naked*, are more particular, pointing at thoſe grand defects and flaws in the foundation, which made their condition ſo wretched and miſerable.

Firſt, *Poor*, that is, * void of righteouſneſs and true holineſs before God: Theſe are the true riches of Chriſtians; and whoſoever wants them, is poor and miſerable, how rich ſoever he be in gifts of the mind, or treaſures of the earth.

Secondly, *Blind*; † *i. e.* without ſpiritual illumination, and ſo neither knowing their diſeaſe, nor their remedy; the evil of ſin, or neceſſity of Chriſt.

Thirdly, *Naked*, ‡ without Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs. Sin is the ſoul's ſhame and nakedneſs; Chriſt's pure and perfect righteouſneſs is its covering or garment; this they wanted,

* πτωχος *deſtitutus juſtitia, et ſanctitate vera, coram Deo.* Grotius.

† τυφλος *Nec morbam ſciens, nec remedium*-----Durham in loc.

‡ γυμνὸς *Carens juſtitia quæ veſtitus eſt Chriſtianorum.* Pareus.

how richly ſoever their bodies were adorned. Theſe were Laodiceans; *i. e.* a juſt, or righteous people (according to the notation of that word) whoſe garments with which they covered themſelves, were made of the home-ſpun thread of their own righteouſneſs.

Thirdly, The diſeaſe of Laodicea is here opened to them in its aggravation: "Thou ſaidſt I am rich, and increaſed "with goods, and have need of nothing; but knoweſt not," *&c.* To be really graceleſs and Chriſtleſs, is a miſerable condition *; but to be ſo, and yet confidently perſuaded of the contrary, is moſt miſerable: to have the very ſymptoms of death upon us, and yet tell thoſe that pity us we are as well as they, is lamentable indeed!

O the efficacy of a ſpiritual deluſion! this was their *diſeaſe*, *graceleſneſs*; and the *aggravation of it*, was their *ſenſeleſneſs*.

Secondly, We have a proper remedy preſcribed, ver. 18. "I counſel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou "mayeſt be rich," *&c.* In which we have to conſider, *Firſt*, what is preſcribed for the cure. *Secondly*, Where it is to be had. *Thirdly*, How to be obtained.

Firſt, What are the remedies preſcribed; and they are three; *Gold*, *white raiment*, and *eye-ſalve*. Firſt, *gold*, the cure of poverty, yea, *Gold tried in the fire*; i. e. grace that hath been variouſly proved already; and the more it is proved, the more its truth will be conſpicuous. The next is *white raiment*, the remedy againſt nakedneſs. And, laſtly, *eye-ſalve*, the effectual cure of blindneſs. Under all theſe choice *metaphors*, more choice and excellent things are ſhadowed, even ſpiritual graces, real holineſs, more precious than gold. Chriſt's imputed righteouſneſs, the richeſt garment in all the wardrobe of heaven; and ſpiritual illumination, the moſt excellent *collyrium* or *eye-ſalve* that ever was, or can be applied to the mental eye or underſtanding of man in this world.

Secondly, Where theſe precious remedies may be had; and you find Chriſt hath the † *monopoly* of them all; *Buy of me*, ſaith Chriſt in the text; he is the *repoſitory* of all graces. Angels, miniſters, ordinances cannot furniſh you with them without Chriſt.

* *Nil miſertus miſero non miſerante ſeipſum*,
i. e. None is more to be pitied than a pityable ſinner who does not pity himſelf.

† *Hoc μονοπωλιον eſt Chriſti, extra quod nulla eſt ſalus.*

Thirdly, How they may be obtained from him; *Buy of me.* On this place Estius, and others, build their doctrine of merit; which is to build a superstructure of hay and stubble upon a foundation of gold. The exigence of the very text itself destroys such conceits: for what have they that are poor, wretched, miserable, and want all things, to give as a price, or by way of merit for those inestimable treasures of grace? *Buying* therefore in this place can signify or intend no more than the acquisition, compassing, or obtaining these things from Jesus Christ, in the use of such means and methods as he hath appointed: and in the use of them we merit grace no more than the *patient* merits of his *physician* by coming to him, and carefully following his prescriptions in the use of such medicaments as he freely gives him: And that place, Isa. lv. 1. (from which this phrase seems to be borrowed) fully clears it; "He that hath no money, let him come and buy wine and "milk without money, and without price."

From all which, these three observations fairly offer themselves to us.

Doct. 1. *That many professors of religion are under very great and dangerous mistakes in their profession.*

Doct. 2. *That true grace is exceeding precious, and greatly enriches the soul that possesseth it.*

Doct. 3. *That only is to be accounted true grace, which is able to endure all those trials appointed, or permitted for the discovery of it.*

The first doctrine naturally rises out of the scope of the text, which is to awaken and convince unsound professors.

The second, from the use the Holy Ghost makes of the best and choicest things in nature, to shadow forth the inestimable worth and preciousness of grace.

And the third, from that particular, and most significant metaphor of gold tried in the fire; by which I here understand a real and solid work of grace, evidencing itself to be so in all the proofs and trials that are made of it; for whatsoever is probational of grace, and puts its soundness and sincerity to the test, is that to it which fire is to gold: In this sense it is used in scripture, Psal. lxvi. 10. "Thou hast tried us as silver is "tried:" And Zech. xiii. 9. "I will bring the third part "through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, "and try them as gold is tried." So that whatsoever it is which examines and tries grace whether it be sound and sincere, that is the fire Christ here speaks of; and such grace as abides these trials, is the gold here intended.

CHAP. II.

Wherein the firſt Doctrine is opened and proved briefly, as a preliminary Diſcourſe to the principal Subject herein deſigned.

DOCT. I.

That many profeſſors of religion are under very great and dangerous miſtakes in their profeſſions.

SECT. I.

ALL flattery is dangerous; ſelf-flattery is more dangerous; but ſelf-flattery in the buſineſs of ſalvation, is the moſt dangerous of all.

To pretend to the good we know we have not, is groſs hypocriſy; to perſuade ourſelves of the good we have not, tho' we think we have it, is formal hypocriſy; and this was the caſe of thoſe ſelf-deceivers in the text.

My deſign in this diſcourſe is not to ſhake the well-built hopes of any man, or beget groundleſs jealouſies, but to diſcover the real dangerous flaws in the foundation of many mens hopes for heaven: Every thing is as its foundation is, and *debile fundamentum fallit opus:* that failing, all fails.

There is a twofold ſelf-ſuſpicion or fear in God's own people: The one is a fear of *caution*, awaking the ſoul to the uſe of all the preventive means for avoiding danger; this is *laudable:* The other a groundleſs ſuſpicion of reigning hypocriſy, tending only to deſpondency; this is *culpable:* By the former the ſoul is guarded againſt *danger;* by the latter it is betrayed into needleſs trouble, and debarred from *peace.*

Good men have ſometimes more fear than they ought, and wicked men have leſs than they ought: The former do ſometimes ſhut their eyes againſt the fair evidences of their own graces; the latter ſhut their eyes againſt the ſad evidences of their ſin and miſery. This is an evil in both, but not equally dangerous; for he that ſhuts his eyes againſt his own graces and privileges, loſeth but his peace and comfort for a time; but he that ſhuts his eyes againſt the evidences of his ſin and miſery, loſeth his precious ſoul to all eternity. Of this latter ſort of ſelf-deceivers the world is full, and theſe are the men I am concerned with in this point.

Oh! that ſome men had leſs trouble! and, oh! that ſome had more! If the *fooliſh virgins* had been leſs confident, they had certainly been more ſafe, Matth. xxv. If thoſe glorious profeſſors in Matth. vii. 22. had not ſhut their eyes againſt their own hypocriſy, Chriſt had not ſhut againſt them the door of ſalvation and glory. Ananias and Sapphira; Hymeneus and Philetus; Alexander and Demas, with multitudes more of that ſort, are the ſad inſtances and proofs of this point. It is ſaid, Prov. xxx. 12. "There is a generation that is pure in "their own eyes, and yet is not waſhed from their filthineſs." Through what falſe ſpectacles do the men of that generation look upon their own ſouls; the men of that generation are multiplied in this generation: Never was any age over-run with a generation of vain, ſelf-cozening, formal profeſſors, as this generation is.

Three things I ſhall here endeavour to do:

1. To give evidence beyond contradiction to this ſad truth, that among profeſſors are found many ſelf-deceivers.

(2.) To aſſign the true cauſes and reaſons why it is ſo. And,

(3.) Improve it in thoſe practical inferences the point affords.

SECT. II.

THAT there are multitudes of ſuch ſelf-deceivers among profeſſors, will appear,

1. *Firſt*, By this, that there are every where to be found more *profeſſors* than *converts*; unregenerate profeſſors, whoſe religion is but the effect of education. Chriſtianity, by the favour of an early providence, was the firſt comer, it firſt beſpoke them for itſelf; theſe are Chriſtians of an human creation, rather born, than new-born, believers. Now all theſe are ſelf-deceived, and haſting to damnation, under the efficacy of a ſtrong deluſion; "for if a man think himſelf to be ſome-"thing when he his nothing, he deceiveth himſelf," ſaith the apoſtle, Gal. vi. 3. Surely our birth-privilege, without the new-birth, is nothing, yea, worſe than nothing, as to our laſt and great account: That which ſtands for a great ſum in our *arithmetic*, it is nothing, it is but a *cypher* you ſee in God's, "Except a man be born again (ſays the lips of truth) he cannot "ſee the kingdom of God," John iii. 3.

Poor ſelf-deceivers, ponder thoſe words of Chriſt; you have hitherto thought your civil education, your dead and heartleſs duties, enough to denominate you Chriſtians before

God; but, go now, and learn what that ſcripture meaneth; and be aſſured you muſt experience another manner of converſion, or elſe it is impoſſible for you to eſcape eternal damnation.

2. *Secondly*, It is too manifeſt by this, that many profeſſors are only acquainted with the externals of religion; and all their duties are no more but a compliance of the outward man with the commands of God: This is the ſuperficial religion which deceives and betrays multitudes into eternal miſery. True religion ſeats itſelf in the inward man, and acts effectually upon the vital powers, killing ſin in the heart, and purging its deſigns and delights from carnality and ſelfiſhneſs; engaging the heart for God; and ſetting it as a bow in its full bent for him, in the approaches we make to him. But how little are many profeſſors acquainted with theſe things?

Alas! if this be all we have to ſtand upon, how dangerous a ſtation is it? What is external conformity, but an artificial imitation of that which only lives in the ſouls of good men? Thus was Jehu deceived; he did many acts of external obedience to God's command, "but Jehu took no heed to walk in "the ways of the Lord God of Iſrael with all his heart," 2 Kings x. 31. And this was his overthrow.

This alſo was the ruin of thoſe formaliſts, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. they came and ſat before the Lord as his people: The word was to them as a lovely ſong; mightily charmed with the modulation of the prophet's voice, and his lively geſtures; but all the while their hearts went after their covetouſneſs. And what abundance of ſuch phariſaical, ſuperficial religion is every where to be found?

3. *Thirdly*, It appears by this, that every trial made by ſufferings upon profeſſors, blows away multitudes, like dry leaves in Autumn, by a ſtormy wind; many fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs in ſhaking times; proſperity multiplies vain profeſſors, and adverſity purges the church of them; "Then ſhall "many be offended," Matth. xxiv. 10.

This the ſcripture every where marks as a ſymptom of hypocriſy; Pſalm lxxviii. 8. "A generation that ſet not their "hearts aright, and whoſe ſpirit was not ſtedfaſt with God." 1 John ii. 19. "But they went out, that they might be made "manifeſt, that they were not of us." Matth. xiii. 21. "For "when tribulation or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, "by and by he is offended." But ſhould one have told them in the days of their firſt profeſſion, that all their zeal and labour in religion would have ended in this, it is like they would have

replied as Hazael to the man of God, 2 Kings viii. 13. "But "what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" *Quantum mutatus ab illo?*

O how unlike is their dark and dirty evening to their glorious and hopeful morning! These professors have more of the moon than of the sun, little light, less heat, but many changes: They deceive many, yea, they deceive themselves, but cannot deceive God. During the calm, what a flourish do they make? And with what gallantry do they sail? By and by you may hear *horrendas tempestates*, and soon after you may see *stendæ naufragia*, a dreadful shipwreck after a furious storm; and no wonder, for they wanted that ἔδιον ὑπόστασις, that ballast and establishment in themselves that would have kept them tight and stable. 1 Pet. iii. 17.

4. *Fourthly*, It is too apparent by this, that many professors secretly indulge and shelter beloved lusts under the wings of their profession. This, like a worm at the root, will wither and kill them at last, how fragrant soever they may seem to be for a season. Gideon had seventy sons, and one bastard; but that one bastard was the death of all his seventy sons.

Some men have many excellent gifts, and perform multitudes of duties; but one secret sin indulged and allowed, will destroy them all at last. He that is partial as to the mortification of his sins, is undoubtedly *hypocritical* in his profession. If David's evidence was good for his integrity, surely such professors will never clear themselves of hypocrisy. "I was also "upright before him, and kept myself from mine iniquity," saith he, Psalm xviii. 23. This is the right eye, and right hand which every sincere Christian must pluck out, and cut off, Matth. v. 29, 30.

Which is a metaphor from chirurgeons, whose manner it is, when the whole is in danger by any part, to cut it off, *ne pars sincera trahatur*; lest all perish.

Their suppressing some lusts, raiseth their confidence; the indulging of one, razeth the foundation of their hopes; and thus they deceive themselves.

5. *Fifthly*, This also manifests the self-deceits of many professors, that the secret duties of religion, or at least the secret intercourse of the soul with God in them, is a secret hid from the knowledge and experience of many professors.

To attend the ordinances of God in the seasons of them, they know; to pray in their families at the stated hours there-

of, they know; but to retire from all the world into their closets, and there to pour out their hearts before the Lord, they know not.

To feel somewhat within, paining them like an empty hungry stomach, until they have eaten that hidden manna, that bread in secret; I mean refreshed their souls with real communion with the Lord there; this is a mystery locked up from the acquaintance of many that call themselves Christians; and yet this is made a characteristical note of a sincere Christian by Christ himself, in Matth. vi. 6.

O reader! if thy heart were right with God, and thou didst not cheat thyself with a vain profession, thou wouldst have frequent business with God, which thou wouldst be loath thy dearest friend, or the wife of thy bosom should be privy to: *Non est religio ubi omnia patent*; religion doth not lay all open to the eyes of men. Observed duties maintain our credit, but secret duties maintain our life. It was the saying of an heathen about his secret correspondency with his friends, what need the world be acquainted with it? 'Thou and I are theatre 'enough to each other.' There are inclosed pleasures in religion, which none but renewed souls do feelingly understand.

6. *Lastly*, How many more profess religion in these days, than ever made religion their business! Philosophy tells us, there is a το εργον and a παρεργον, a main business; and a by-business; the same is found in religion also.

There are "that give themselves to the Lord," 2 Cor. viii. 5. whose conversation, or trade, is in heaven, Phil. iii. 18. the end or scope of whose life is Christ, Heb. xiii. 7, 8. who give religion the precedency both in time and affection, Psalm v. 9. Rom. xii. 11. who are constant and indefatigable in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

And there are also that take up religion rather for ostentation than for an occupation, who never mind the duties of religion, but when they have nothing else to do; and when their outward man is engaged in the duties of it, yet their heart is not in it; they hear, they pray, ὁ δὲ ψυχη ἐξω, as Chrysostome speaks, but their souls, their thoughts, and minds are abroad. It is not their business to have fellowship with God in duties, to get their lusts mortified, their hearts tried, their souls conformed to the image of God in holiness.

They pray as if they prayed not, and hear as if they heard not; and if they feel no power in ordinances, no quickening in duties, it is no disappointment at all to them; for these

were not their deſigns in drawing nigh to God in theſe appointments.

And thus you ſee what numbers of profeſſors deceive themſelves.

SECT. III.

AND if we ſeriouſly enquire into the grounds and cauſes of this ſelf-deceit among profeſſors, we ſhall find theſe four things conſpiring to delude and cheat them in the great concern of their ſalvation.

1. *Firſt*, The natural deceitfulneſs of the heart, than which nothing is more treacherous, and falſe, Jer. xvii. 9. "The "heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked;" * עקב מכל הלב *Supplantativum cor, prae omnibus*; the heart is the greateſt ſupplanter, the moſt crafty and ſubtle cheat of all, that deceives us, as Jacob did his brother (to whoſe name this text alludes). It defeats us of our heavenly heritage, as Jacob ſupplanted him in his earthly one, while we are gone a hunting after earthly trifles. And wherein its deceitfulneſs principally appears, you may ſee by the ſolemn caveat of the apoſtle, James i. 22. wherein he warns us to beware, that in hearing the word we deceive not ourſelves by falſe reaſonings; for ſo παραλογιζομενοι ἑαυτους imports, and may be ſtrictly rendered, falſe reaſoning themſelves, namely, by making falſe ſyllogiſms; whereby they miſconclude about their ſpiritual and eternal eſtate and condition, and befool themſelves.

The time will come when a man's own heart will be found to have the chief hand in his ruin; and what Apollodorus did but fancy his heart ſaid to him, ſome mens hearts will tell them in earneſt, when they come to the place of miſery and torment; ἐγω σοι τουτων αἰτια, I have been the cauſe of all this, I have betrayed thee into all theſe torments: it was my lazineſs, my credulity, my averſeneſs to the ways of ſtrict godlineſs, mortification and ſelf-denial which have for ever undone thee: when thou fateſt under the convincing truths of the goſpel, it was I that whiſpered thoſe atheiſtical ſurmiſes into thine ear, perſuading thee that all thou heardſt was but the intemperate heat of an hot-brained zealot; when the judgments of God were denounced, and the miſery thou now feeleſt forewarned and threatened, it was I that wiſpered what the tongue of another once ſpake out, *Tunc credam, cum illuc venero*: I will believe it when I come thither.

Surely this is a great truth which was obſerved by the wiſ-

* Ar. Mont.

oft of men, "He that truſteth in his own heart, is a fool," Prov. xxviii. 26. And thouſands of ſuch fools are to be found among profeſſors.

2. *Secondly*, Satan is a chief conſpirator in this treacherous deſign; *we are not ignorant* (ſaith the apoſtle) *of his devices*; νοήματα, his ſophiſtry and ſlights, 2 Cor. ii. 11. his δόλιαι, trains and methods of temptation, which are thoroughly ſtudied, and artificially moulded and ordered; even ſuch *ſyſtems* as *tutors* and *profeſſors* of *arts* and *ſciences* have, and read over to their *auditors*; as * one judiciouſly obſerves, to be the import of that text, Eph. vi. 11. Nor is it to be wondered at, conſidering his vaſt knowledge, deep malice, and long experience in this art of cheating, together with the great corruption and proneneſs of the hearts of men to cloſe with his devices, and believe his impoſtures, that ſo vaſt a number of ſouls are taken "captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26.

It is the god of this world that blinds the minds of them that believe not, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "The god of this world," (ſo called by a Mimeſis) who leads a world of poor deluded wretches to deſtruction, having firſt *blinded their minds*, that is deluded, and with his helliſh art practiſed upon their underſtanding, that το ηγεμονικον, leading and directive faculty, which is to the ſoul what eyes are to the body.

I remember Baſil brings in Satan thus inſulting Chriſt: I have them! I have them! for all thy blood and miracles, thy wooings and beſeechings, thy knockings and ſtrivings, I have cozened thee of them at the very gates of heaven: for all their illuminations, and taſting of the powers of the world to come, I have ſhipwrackt them in the very mouth of the haven.

3. *Thirdly*, The common works found in unregenerate ſouls deceive many, who cannot diſtinguiſh them from the ſpecial works of the Spirit in God's elect: ſee that ſtartling ſcripture, Heb. vi. 4. where you find, among the common operations of the Spirit upon apoſtates, that illumination, which gives perſpicuity to their minds in diſcerning ſpiritual truths, and that frequently with more diſtinctneſs and depth of judgment than ſome gracious ſouls attain unto; beſides, it is the matter out of which many rare and excellent gifts are formed in admirable variety, which are ſingularly uſeful to others, as they are exerciſed in expounding the ſcriptures, defending

* Dr. Goodwin's Child of light.

the truths of Christ by solid arguments, preaching, praying, *&c.* and make the subject of them renowned and honoured in the church of God, whilst, mean time, they are dazzled with their own splendor, and fatally ruined by them.

There you find also tasting as well as enlightening: so that they seem to abound not only in knowledge, but in sense also; *i. e.* in some kind of *experience* of what they know; for experience is the bringing of things to the test of spiritual sense. They do taste or experience the good that comes by the promises of the word, and discoveries of heaven and glory, though they feel not experimentally the transforming efficacy of these things, upon their own souls.

Now, that illumination furnishing them with excellent gifts (as before was noted), enabling them to assent to gospel-truths, which the scripture calls faith, Acts viii. 12. and working in them conviction of sin, 1 Sam. xv. 24. reformation of life, 2 Pet. ii. 20. and touching their affections also with transient joy in the discovery of those truths,

And this taste, which comes so near to the experience, which the sanctified soul enjoys, seems to put their condition beyond all controversy, and lay a foundation for their ill-built confidence; nothing is more apt to beget and nourish such a confidence than the meltings and workings of our affections about spiritual things; for, as a † grave divine hath well observed, such a man seems to have all that is required of a Christian, and to have attained the very end of all knowledge, which is operation and influence upon the affections. When they shall find heat in their affections, as well as light in their minds, how apt are they to say (as these self-deceivers in the text did) they "are rich, and have need "of nothing." Now of all the false signs of grace, by which men cozen themselves, none are so dangerous and destructive to souls, as those that come nearest true ones: never doth Satan more effectually and securely manage his cheats, than when he is transformed into an angel of light.

Among this sort of self-deceivers, how many gifted men, and, among that sort, some employed in the office of the ministry will be found, whose daily employment being about spiritual things, studying, preaching, praying, *&c.* do conclude themselves sanctified persons, because they are conversant about sacred employments, as if the subject must be, because the object is, sacred. Oh! that such would seriously ponder these

† Mr. A. Burgess.

two ſcriptures, Matth. vii. 22. "Many will ſay unto me in "that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophefied in thy name? "and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name done "many wonderful things?" And 1 Cor. ix. 27.—"leſt that "by any means, when I have preached unto others, I myſelf "ſhould be a caſt-away."

4. *Laſtly*, To add no more, this ſtrengthens ſelf-deceit exceedingly in many, *viz.* Their obſervations of, and comparing themſelves with others. Thus the Phariſees (thoſe groſs ſelf-deceivers) "truſted in themſelves that they were righte-"ous, and deſpiſed others," Luke xviii. 9. Their low rating of others, gave them that high rate and value of themſelves. And thus the proverb is made good, *Regnat luſcus inter cæcos*; he that hath but one eye, is a king among the blind.

Thus the falſe apoſtles cheated and befooled themſelves, 2 Cor. x. 12. "But they meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, "and comparing themſelves among themſelves, are not wiſe." God hath not made one man a meaſure or ſtandard to another man, but his word is the common beam or ſcale to try all men.

Theſe men are as ſharp-ſighted to note other mens evil as their own excellencies; to eye the miſcarriages of others with deriſion, and their own performances with admiration.

They bleſs themſelves when they behold the profane in their impieties, Luke xviii. 11. "God, I thank thee, that I am not as "other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this "publican;" *q. d.* O what a ſaint am I in compariſon of theſe miſcreants! the Phariſee's religion you ſee runs all upon *nots*; a negative holineſs is enough to him; and the meaſure he takes of it is by compariſon of himſelf with others more externally vile than himſelf. A Chriſtian may ſay with praiſe and humility, "I am not as ſome men are; but tho' he knows nothing "by himſelf, yet is he not thereby juſtified," 1 Cor. iv. 4. He neither rakes together the enormities of the vileſt, or the infirmities of the holieſt, to juſtify and applaud himſelf as theſe ſelf-deceivers do. And theſe are the cauſes and occaſions of that general deception, under which ſo great a part of the profeſſing world bow down and periſh.

SECT. IV.

3. IN the laſt place I ſhall improve this point variouſly, according to the importance and uſefulneſs of it, with as much brevity and cloſeneſs of application as I can. And,

Uſe 1. Shall be for caution to profeſſors: before I tell you what uſe you ſhould make of it, I muſt tell you what uſe you may not make of it.

Firſt, Do not make this uſe of it; to conclude from what hath been ſaid, that all profeſſors are but a pack of hypocrites, and that there is no truth nor integrity in any man: this is both intolerable arrogance, to aſcend the throne of God; and unparelleled uncharitableneſs, to judge the hearts of all men.

Some men are as apt to conclude others to be hypocrites, by meaſuring their hearts by their own, as others are to conclude themſelves ſaints, by comparing their own excellencies with other mens corruptions: but, bleſſed be God! there is ſome grain among the heap of chaff, ſome true diamonds among the counterfeit ſtones: the devil hath not the whole piece; a remnant, according to election, belongs really to the Lord.

Secondly, Do not make this uſe of it, that aſſurance muſt needs be impoſſible, becauſe ſo many profeſſors are found to be ſelf-deceivers.

That aſſurance is one of the great difficulties in religion, is a great truth; but that it is therefore unattainable in this world, is very falſe. Popiſh doctrine indeed makes it impoſſible; but that doctrine is practically confuted in the comfortable experience of many ſouls: all are commanded to ſtrive for it, 2 Pet. i. 10. "Give all diligence to make your calling and "election ſure:" and ſome have the happineſs to obtain it, 2 Tim. i. 12. "For I know whom I have believed; and I am "perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have commit-"ted unto him againſt that day."

Let the ſimilar works upon hypocrites reſemble as much as they will the ſaving works of the Spirit upon believers; yet God doth always, and the ſaints do ſometimes plainly diſcern the difference.

Thirdly, Do not make this uſe of it, to conceal or hide the truths or graces of God, or refuſe to profeſs, or confeſs them before men, becauſe many profeſſors deceive themſelves and others alſo, by a vain profeſſion: Becauſe another profeſſeth what he hath not, muſt you therefore hide or deny what you have? It is true, the poſſeſſion of grace and truth in your own ſouls, is that which ſaves you; but the profeſſion and confeſſion of it, is that which honours God, and edifies; yea, ſometimes is the inſtrument to ſave others; it is your comfort that you feel it, it is others comfort to know that you do ſo. Oſtentation is your ſin, but a ſerious and humble profeſſion is your duty, Rom. x. 9.

SECT. V.

Use 2. HAving shewed you in the former section what use you ought not to make of this doctrine, I will next shew you what use you ought to make of it; and surely you cannot improve this point to a better purpose than from it to take warning, and look to yourselves, that you be not of that number who deceive themselves in their profession. If this be so, suffer me closely to press that great apostolical caution, 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest "he fall." O professors! look carefully to your foundation; be not high-minded, but fear. You have, it may be, done and suffered many things in and for religion; you have excellent gifts and sweet comforts; a warm zeal for God, and high confidence of your integrity: All this may be right (for ought I, or, it may be, you know;) but yet it is possible it may be false also: You have sometimes judged yourselves, and pronounced yourselves upright; but remember your final sentence is not yet pronounced by your Judge. And what if God weigh you over again in his more equal balance, and should say, *Mene Tekel*, thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting: What a confounded man wilt thou be under such a sentence! *Quae splendent in conspectu hominis, sordent in conspectu Judicis*: Things that are highly esteemed of men, are an abomination in the sight of God; he seeth not as man seeth.

Thy heart may be false, and thou not know it; yea, it may be false, and thou strongly confident of its integrity.

The saints may approve thee, and God condemn thee; Rev. iii. 1. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, but thou art "dead." Men may say, there is a true Nathaniel; and God may say, there is a self-cozening Pharisee.

Reader, thou hast heard of Judas and Demas; of Ananias and Sapphira; of Hymeneus and Philetus; once renowned and famous professors, and thou hast heard what they proved at last.

Take heed their case be not thine own; do they not all, as it were, with one mouth cry to thee, O professor! if thou wilt not come where we are, do not cozen thyself as we did: if thou expectest a better place and lot, be sure thou get a sincerer heart: Had we been more self-suspicious, we had been more safe.

I would not scare you with needless jealousies, but I would fain prevent fatal mistakes. Do not you find your hearts deceitful in many things? Do not you shuffle over secret du-

ties? Do not you censure the same evils in others, which you scarce reprove in yourselves? Are there not many by-ends in duties? Do not you find you are far less affected with a great deal of service and honour done to God by others, than with a little by yourselves?

Is it not hard to look upon other men's excellencies without envy, or upon your own without pride?

And are you not troubled with a busy devil, as well as with a bad heart? Hath not he that circuits the whole world, observed you? Hath he not studied your constitution sins, and found out that sin which most easily besets you? Hath he less malice against your souls than others? Surely you are in the very thicket of temptations; thousands of snares are round about you. O how difficultly are the righteous saved! How hard to be upright! How few even of the professing world win heaven at last!

O therefore search your hearts, professors, and let this caution go down to your very reins; "Let him that thinks he "stands, take heed lest he fall."

Away with rash uncharitable censures of others, and be more just and severe in censuring yourselves. Away with dry and unprofitable controversies, and spend your thoughts upon this great question, Am I sound, or am I rotten at heart? Am I a new creature, or the old creature still in a new creature's dress and habit? Beg the Lord that you be not deceived in that great point (your integrity) whatever you may be mistaken in. Pray that you be not given up to an heedless, careless, and vain spirit, and then have religious duties for a rattle, to still and quiet your consciences.

Surely that ground-work can never be laid too sure, upon which so great a stress as thy soul and eternity must depend. It will not repent thee, I dare promise, when thou comest to die, that thou hast employed thy time and strength to this end? Whilst others are panting after the dust of the earth, and saying, Who will shew us any good? be thou panting after the assurance of the love of God, and crying, Who will shew me how to make my calling and election sure?

O deceive not yourselves with names and notions! Think not, because you are for a stricter way of worship, or because you associate with, and are accordingly denominated, one of the more reformed professors, that therefore you are safe enough: Alas! how small an interest have titles, modes, and denominations in religion? Suppose a curious artist take a

lump of lead and refine it, and cast it into the mould, whence it comes forth shining, and bearing some noble figure, suppose of an eagle; yet it is but a leaden eagle. Suppose the figure of a man, and that in the most exact lineaments and proportions; yet still it is but a leaden man: Nay, let it bear the figure of an angel, it is but a leaden angel: For the base and ignoble matter is the same it was, though the figure be not. Even so, take an unregenerate carnal man, let his life be reformed, and his tongue refined, and call him a zealous Conformist, or a strict Non-conformist; call him a Presbyterian, an Independent, or what you will; he is all the while but a carnal Conformist, or Non-conformist; an unregenerate Presbyterian, a carnal Independent; for the nature is still the same, though the stamp and figure his profession gives him be not the same.

O my friends! believe it, fine names and brave words are of little value with God: God will no more spare you for these, than Samuel did Agag for his delicate ornaments, and spruce appearance: Either make sure the root of the matter, or the leaves of a vain profession will not long cover you.

To be deceived by another is bad enough; but to deceive ourselves, is a thousand times worse.

To deceive ourselves in truths of the superstructure, is bad; and they that do so, shall suffer loss, 1 Cor. iii. 12. But to deceive ourselves in the foundation, is a desperate deceit, and shipwrecks all our hopes and happiness at once.

If any man lose his money by a cheat, it troubles him; but to lose his soul by a cheat, will confound him. If a man lose an eye, an ear, a hand, a foot, yet *omnia Deus dedit duplicia*, as Chrysostome speaks; God hath given these members double, so that there is another left; *animam vero unam*: But the soul is one, and only one; and if that be damned, you have not another to be saved.

O therefore be restless till it be, and till you know it be, out of eternal danger!

SECT. VI.

Use 3. IN conclusion: If so many professors of religion be cheated in their profession, let all that are well satisfied and assured of their integrity, bless the Lord whilst they live for that mercy. O it is a mercy that no unsanctified soul can have: yea, and it is a mercy that many gracious souls cannot obtain, though they seek it with tears, and would part with all the pleasant things they have in the world to enjoy it.

This is that mercy that gives souls the highest pleasure this world is acquainted with, or the state of this mortality can bear; for let the well-assured soul but consider what it is assured of, Christ, with the purchases of his blood. O what is this! "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine," Cant. ii. 16. What a vital, ravishing, over-powering efficacy is in that voice of faith? let it but look back a few years, and compare what it was with what it is now; it was afar off, it is now made nigh, Eph. ii. 12, 13. It was not beloved, but is now beloved, Rom. ix. 25, 26. It had not obtained mercy, but now hath obtained mercy, 1 Pet. ii. 10. Or let the assured soul look forward, and compare what it now is, and hath, with what it shortly shall be made, and put in possession of: "Beloved, (saith the a-"postle) now are we the sons of God; but it doth not yet "appear what we shall be: But we know that when he shall "appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2.

I say, let the assured soul but steep its thoughts, by meditation, in these subjects, and it will be impossible to keep him from the most agreeable transports of joy and delight.

O what a life have you in comparison of other men? Some have two hells, one present, another coming; you have two heavens, one in hand, the other in hope. Some of your own brethren in Christ, that have been, it may be, many years panting after assurance, are still denied it; but God hath indulged so peculiar a favour to you. Bless ye the Lord, and make his praise glorious.

CHAP. III.

Containing the use and improvement of

DOCT. II.

That true grace is exceeding precious, and greatly enricheth the soul that hath it: It is Christ's gold.

SECT. I.

THE Lord Jesus here chuseth the most pure, precious, resplendent, durable, and valuable thing, in all the treasuries and magazines of nature, to shadow forth saving grace, which is infinitely more excellent: Certainly that must be the

best thing, which the best things in nature can but imperfectly shadow forth. What was the golden oil emptied through the two golden pipes, Zech. iv. 12. but the precious graces of God, flowing through Christ, into all his members: Gold is precious; but one drachm of saving grace is more precious than all the gold of Ophir: "It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall "silver be weighed for a price thereof," Job xxviii. 15. Surely gold and silver, sapphires, diamonds, and rubies, are not worth the mentioning, when saving grace is once mentioned. For consider it,

1. *First*, In its cause and fountain from whence it flows, and you shall find it to be the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. who, upon that account, is called *the Spirit of grace*, Heb. x. 29. It derives its original from the Most High; it is spirit born of Spirit John iii. 6 All the rules of morality, all human diligence and industry can never produce one gracious habit or act alone; 2 Cor. iii. 5. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves," *&c.*

Nay, we speak not becoming the incomparable worth of grace, when we say, it is the fruit and birth of the Spirit; for so are common gifts also. There are several emanations from this sun, divers streams from this fountain; but of all his operations and productions, this of saving grace is the most noble and excellent. Gifts are from the Spirit as well as grace, but grace is more excellent than the best gifts, 1 Cor. xii 31. "Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet shew I unto you a more excel-"lent way." Hence you read in Phil i. 10. "Of things that "are excellent," or as the original, τα διαφεροντα, might be rendered, things that differ, namely, in respect of excellency, not as good and evil, but as less good and more good differ. Gifts have their value and preciousness, but the best gifts differ as much from grace, as brass from gold, though both be generated by the influence of the same sun. Gifts (as one saith) are dead graces but graces are living gifts; it is the most excellent production of the highest and most excellent cause.

2. *Secondly*, Consider it in its nature, and you will find it divine, 2 Pet. i. 4. "Partakers of the divine nature," *viz.* in our sanctification; not that it gives us the properties of the divine nature, they are incommunicable; but the similitude and resemblance of it is stamped upon our souls, in the work of grace.

"The new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of "him that created him," Col. iii. 10. The schoolmen, and some of the fathers, place this image or resemblance of God,

in the natural faculties of the soul, *viz.* the understanding, memory, and will; which is an umbrage of a trinity in unity; but it rather consists in the renovation of the faculties by grace; for in this we bear the divine image upon our souls, and that image or resemblance of God in holiness is the beauty and honour of our souls.

It is their beauty: "How fair, and how pleasant art thou, "O love, for delights!" saith Christ of his people, Cant. vii. 6. Natural beauty consists in the *symmetry* and comely proportion of parts each with the other; spiritual beauty in the harmony or agreeableness of our souls to God: and as it is our chiefest beauty, so certainly it is our highest honour; for it gives us access unto God, who is the fountain of honour and glory; and this makes the righteous more excellent than his neighbour; let his neighbour be what he will, though the blood of nobles run in his veins, the righteous is more excellent than he, except saving grace be also diffused into his soul.

3. *Thirdly*, Consider it in its recipient subject, and you will find its value still to increase; for the precious oil of saving-grace is never poured into any other than an elect vessel.

Hence faith, one branch of sanctification, is, with respect to its subject, stiled *The faith of God's elect*, Tit. i. 1. Whosoever finds true grace in his soul, may (during the evidence thereof) from it strongly conclude his election, looking backward, and his salvation, looking forward, Rom. viii. 30. It marks and seals the person in whom it is, for glory, "God hath set apart "him that is godly for himself," Psal. iv. 3.

4. *Fourthly*, View the precious worth of grace in its excellent effects and influences upon the soul in which it inheres.

(1.) It adorns with incomparable ornaments, which are of great price in the sight of God, 1 Pet. iii. 4. Yea, it reflects such beams of glory in the soul where its seat is, that Christ himself, the author, is also the admirer of it; Cant. iv. 9. "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse! thou "hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one of "the chains of thy neck!" and as one overcome with its excelling beauty, he saith, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for "they have overcome me," Cant. vi. 5.

(2.) It elevates and enobles a man's spirit beyond all other principles in man; it sets the heart and affections upon heaven, and takes them up with the glory of the invisible world, Phil. iii. 20. "But our conversation is in heaven, from whence we "look for the Saviour". Whilst others are trading for corn and wine, for sheep and oxen, for feathers and trifles, the gracious

soul is trading with God for pardon and peace, for righteousness and life, for glory and immortality: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," John i. 3.

(3.) It doth not only raise the spirit by conversing with God, and things above, but transforms the soul, by that converse, into the likeness of those heavenly objects it converseth with; "it changes them into the same image," 2 Cor. iii. 18. So that though the sanctified man still remains the *who he was*, yet not the *what he was* before; the very temper of his spirit is altered.

(4.) It doth not only transform the soul in which it is, but preserves the subject in which it is: it is a singular preservative from sin; so that though sin be in them still, and works in them still, yet it cannot prevail in them still to fulfil the lusts of it, as it was wont to do, Gal. v 17. Sin conceives, but cannot bring forth fruit unto death; this gives a miscarrying womb.

(5.) It doth not only preserve it from sin, but grace establisheth the soul, in whom it is, far beyond any other arguments without, or any other principles within a man. "It is a good "thing that the heart be established with grace." Heb. xiii. 9. This is that which the apostle calls our own stedfastness, or that ballast we have within ourselves; which keeps us right and stable. O the excellency of grace!

(6.) To conclude; it is the root of all that precious fruit which we bring forth to God in this world: it is the root of every gracious word in our lips, and of every gracious work in our hands: be the matter of our gracious thoughts never so excellent, the matter of our heavenly discourses and prayers never so sweet, still grace is the root of the matter, Job xix. 28. O then what a precious thing is grace!

5. *Fifthly*, View it in its properties, and you will sooner discover its transcendent excellencies: the richest epithets are no hyperboles here; we speak not beyond the value of it, when we call it supernatural grace, for so it is: it comes down from above, from the Father of lights, Jam. i. 7. Nature can never be improved to that height, how much soever its admirers boast of it: nor do we strain too high, when we call it immortal grace; for so hath God made it. This is that water which springs up in the sanctified soul unto eternal life, John iv. 14. It will not die when thou diest, but ascend with the soul from which it is inseparable, and be received up with it into glory, Rom. viii. 10. You may outlive your friends; you may out-

live your estates; you may outlive your gifts; but you cannot outlive your graces.

Shall I say it is the most sweet and comfortable thing that ever the soul was acquainted with in this world, next Jesus Christ, the author and fountain of it. Sure, if so I speak, I have as many witnesses to attest it, as there be gracious souls in the world: nothing is more comfortable than grace, except Christ; and yet without grace no soul can feel the comforts of Christ, in the troubles of life, or in the straits of death. This is a spring of comfort!

6. *Sixthly*, Consider it in its design and scope; and you will still discern more and more of its precious excellency: for what is the aim and end of God in the infusions and improvements of grace, but to attemper and mould our spirits by it, into a meetness and fitness for the enjoyment of himself in the world to come? Col. i. 12. "Giving thanks to the Father, who "hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the "saints in light." Compare this with 2 Cor. v. 5. "Now he "that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God."

O blessed design! how precious must that work be, which is wrought for so high and glorious a purpose as this is? No work more excellent, no end more noble.

7. *Seventhly*, Consider the means and instruments, both principal and subordinate, employed in this work: many blessed instruments are set on work to beget, conserve, and improve it in our souls; and these all speak the precious worth of it. No wise man will dig for a base and worthless metal with golden mattocks. The blood of Christ was shed to procure it, Heb. xiii. 12.

The Spirit of God is sent forth to form and create it; for it is his own workmanship, Ephes. ii. 10. his fruit, Gal. v. 22.

The ordinances and officers of the gospel were at first instituted, and ever since continued in the church, for this work's sake, John xvii. 17. and Eph. iv. 12. It is the fruit of Christ's blood; yea, and it hath cost the sweat and blood of the dispensers of the gospel too.

Nay, all the works of providence look this way, and aim at this thing, Rom. viii. 28. What is the errand of all God's rods, but to make us partakers of his holiness? Heb. xii. 10.

8. *Eighthly*, The high value that the most high God sets upon grace, shews it to be an excellent thing indeed: "It is of "great price in his sight," 1 Pet. iii. 4. no service finds acceptation with God, but what is performed by grace: None but sanctified vessels are meet for the master's use. "The end of the

" commandment is charity out of a pure heart;" 1 Tim. i. 5.

The weakeſt performances of grace find acceptance with him, though clogged with many ſinful weakneſſes and infirmities, Heb. xi 31, 32. If God ſo prize it, well may we: He that made the jewel, beſt underſtands the value of it.

9. *Ninthly*, The hypocritical pretences made to it all over the profeſſing world, ſhew what a moſt precious and deſireable thing it is: If there were not ſome ſingular glory in it, why doth every one covet to be reputed gracious? Nay, the devil himſelf baits many of his hooks of temptation with a ſhew of grace; for he knows ſin hath no native beauty of its own to entice, and therefore he borrows the paint and pretence of holineſs to cover it: but, oh! what a dilemma will the hypocrite be poſed with at laſt? And how can he anſwer it when God ſhall demand?

If grace were evil, why didſt thou affect the name and reputation of it? And if it were good, why didſt thou ſatisfy thyſelf with the empty name and ſhadow of it only?

10. *Tenthly*, To conclude: the incomparable eſteem that all good men have for it, ſhews it to be a thing of ineſtimable price.

Grace is the ſum of all their prayers, the ſcope of all their endeavours, the matter of their chief joy, the reward of their afflictions and ſufferings; their chief joys and ſorrows, hopes and fears in this world, are taken up about it. By all which it appears that its price is above rubies; and all the gold and ſilver in the world are but dung and droſs in compariſon with it.

SECT. II.

Containing ſix practical inferences from this precious truth.

Infer. 1. Is ſaving grace more precious than gold? *Let them that have it, bleſs God for it, and not boaſt.* Mens hearts are as apt to puff up and ſwell with ſpiritual, as with material gold: It is hard to be an owner of much of this gold, and not be lifted up with it. To keep down thy heart, and preſerve thine eyes from being dazzled with theſe thy glorious excellencies, it will be needful for thee, Chriſtian, ſometimes to conſider,

That although grace be one of the moſt excellent things that ever God created, yet it is *but a creature*, a dependent thing, 1 Cor. v. 17.

Yea, it is not only a creature, but a very imperfect creature yet in thy ſoul, labouring under many weakneſſes, Phil. iii. 12. and ſometimes ready to die, Rev. iii. 2.

Though it can do many things for you, yet it cannot justify you before God: You cannot make a garment of it to cover your guilt, nor plead the dignity of it at God's bar for your discharge: It is not your inherent, but Christ's imputed righteousness must do that for you, though in other respects it be very necessary.

Nay, remember how excellent soever it be, it is not the native growth and product of your hearts; all the grace you have is foreign to your natures; and what you have is received, 1 Cor. iv. 7.

And, lastly, remember he that is most proud and conceited of his own graces will be found to be the owner of least grace, and hath most cause to question whether he hath any or no. It is the nature of grace to humble, abase, and empty the soul; and it is the strength of our corruptions which thus puffs us up with vain conceits.

Infer. 2. Is saving grace more excellent than gold? *What cause then have the poorest Christians to be well satisfied with their lot?* To others God hath given Ishmael's portion, the fatness of the earth; to you Isaac's, the graces of the covenant: Their portion is paid in brass, yours in gold. Many of you are poor in the world, but "rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom "which God hath promised," Jam. ii. 5. What is the dust of the earth to the fruits of the Spirit? You are troubled that you have no more of the world: It may be if you had more gold, you would have less grace. You consider not how many are poor and wretched in both worlds, moneyless and Christless too: You do not consider you are near come to that state, in which all your wants will be fully supplied; where you shall not need the treasures of the earth, and have your desires satisfied out of the treasures of grace and glory.

Infer. 3. Is saving grace gold? yea, infinitely more precious than gold? *Then surely declining Christians are great losers, and have cause to be great mourners.* The remission of the least degree of grace, is more to be lamented than the loss of the greatest sum of gold.

Though the habits of grace be not lost, yet the acts of grace may be suspended, 2 Sam. xii. 31. The degrees of grace may be remitted. Rev. iii. 3. The evidences of grace may be clouded, and consequently the comforts of grace may be suspended, Isa. l. 10. and the least of these is such a loss, as all the treasures of the earth cannot repair. Well therefore may declined Chri-

ſtians challenge the firſt place among all the mourners in the world.

Infer. 4. Is grace ſo invaluably precious? *How precious then ought the ordinances of God to be to our ſouls, by which grace is firſt communicated, and afterwards improved in our ſouls!* "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thou-"ſands of gold and ſilver," Pſal. cxix. 72. and good reaſon, whilſt it imparts and improves that to which gold and ſilver are but droſs and dung.

None but theſe that value not grace, will ever ſlight the means, or deſpiſe and injure the inſtruments thereof. It is a ſad ſign of a graceleſs world, when theſe precious things fall under contempts and ſlights.

Infer. 5. If grace be ſo precious, how watchful ſhould all gracious perſons be in the days of temptation! The deſign of temptation is to rob you of your treaſure: When cut-purſes get into the croud, we uſe to ſay, Friends, look to your purſes. How many brave Chriſtians have we read and heard of, that have rather choſen to part with their lives, than with their graces, who have "reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin?" Heb. xii. 4.

O, Chriſtians! you live in a cheating age; many ſeeming Chriſtians have loſt all, and many real Chriſtians have loſt much; ſo much, that they are like to ſee but little comfort in this world; who are like to go mourning to the grave with that lamentation, Job xxix. 2, 3. "O that it were with me as in times "paſt!"

Infer. 6. To conclude: Is there ſuch precious worth in ſaving grace? *Then bleſs God for, and diligently uſe all means to increaſe and improve it in your ſouls.* It is gold for preciouſneſs, and for uſefulneſs, and muſt not be laid up in a napkin: That is a ſin condemned by the very ſcope of that parable, Matth. xxv. 14, 15.

All Chriſtians indeed have not the ſame advantages of improvement; but all muſt improve it according to the advantages they have, in order to an account. Reſerved Chriſtians, who live too abſtracted from the ſociety and communion of others, and diſperſe not their ſtreams abroad to the benefit of others, nor improve the graces of others for their own benefit, are wanting both to their own duty and comfort. See you a man rich in grace, O trade with him if you can, to improve yourſelves by him; and the rather, becauſe you know not how ſoon death may ſnatch him from you, and with him all his ſtock of grace is gone from you too, except what you made your own

whilst you conversed with him: But, alas! alas! instead of holy, profitable, soul-improving communion, some are sullenly reserved; some are negligent and lazy; some are litigious and wrangling; more apt to draw forth the dross, than the gold; I mean the corruptions, than graces of others. And how few there be that drive a profitable trade for increase of grace, is sad to consider.

And as grace is not improved by communion with men, so I doubt most Christians thrive but little in their communion with God: We are too seldom in our closets, too little upon our knees; and when we are there, we gain but little; we come not off such gainers by duty as we might. O Christians! think when you are hearing and praying, I am now trading with heaven for that which is infinitely better than gold. God is rich to all that call upon him: What a treasure may I get this hour, if the fault be not in mine own heart? And thus of the second observation.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein the third doctrine, being the main subject of this treatise, is opened, and the method of the whole discourse stated.

DOCT. I.

That only is to be accounted true grace, which is able to endure all those trials appointed or permitted for the discovery of it.

SECT. I.

THE most wise God hath seen it fit to set all his people in a state of trial in this world. First, he tries, and then he crowns them; James i. 12. "Blessed is the man that "endureth temptation, πειρασμον, *i. e.* [probation or trial]; "for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life," &c.

No man can say what he is; whether his graces be true or false, till they be tried and examined by those things which are to them as fire is to gold. These self-deceivers in the text thought they had grace; yea, they thought they had been rich in grace; but it proved no better than dross: And therefore Christ here counsels them to buy of him gold tried in the fire; *i. e.* true grace indeed, which appears to be so upon the various proofs and examinations of its sincerity, which are to be made

in this world, as well as in the great ſolemn trial it muſt come to in the world to come.

The ſcripture ſpeaks of a twofold trial, *viz.*

A trial of mens { Opinions, and Graces.

1. *Firſt*, The opinions and judgments of men are tried as by fire; in which ſenſe we are to underſtand that place, 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13. "Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, "ſilver, precious ſtones, wood, hay, ſtubble, every man's "work ſhall be made manifeſt; for the day ſhall declare it, "becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire, and the fire ſhall try eve-"ry man's work, of what ſort it is."

This text ſpeaks of ſuch perſons as hold the foundation of Chriſtianity, but yet ſuperſtructed ſuch doctrines and practices, as were no more able to endure the trial, than hay, wood, or ſtubble, can endure the fire *. Such a perſon hereby brings himſelf to danger; and though the apoſtle will not deny the poſſibility, yet he aſſerts the difficulty of his ſalvation; "He "ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire †;" *i. e.* as a man is ſaved by leaping out of his houſe at midnight, when it is all on fire about his ears; for ſo that phraſe imports, Amos iv. 11. and Jude 23. Glad to eſcape naked, and with the loſs of his goods; bleſſing God he hath his life for a prey: As little regard ſhall ſuch have to their erroneous notions and unſcriptural opinions at laſt.

2. *Secondly*, The graces of men are brought to the teſt, as well as their opinions. Trial will be made of their hearts, as well as their heads; and upon this trial the everlaſting ſafety and happineſs of the perſon depends. If a man's opinions be ſome of them found hay or ſtubble, yet ſo long as he holds the head, and is right in the foundation, he may be ſaved; but if a man's ſuppoſed graces be found ſo, all the world cannot ſave him: There is no way of eſcape, if he finally deceive himſelf herein. And of this trial of graces my text ſpeaks: Sincere grace is gold tried by fire.

There is a twofold trial of grace; active and paſſive.

Firſt, An active trial of it, in which we try it ourſelves, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Examine yourſelves; prove yourſelves;" *i. e.* meaſure your hearts, duties and graces, by the rule of the word;

* Upon a thorough trial they vaniſh into ſmoke.

† From which judgment he ſhall eſcape juſt as one does naked, or with his bare life, out of the midſt of flames. *Chryſoſtome.*

see how they answer to that rule: Bring your hearts and the word together by solemn self-examination; confer with your reins, and commune with your own hearts.

Secondly, A passive trial of it: whether we try it or no, God will try it, he will bring our gold to the touchstone, and to the fire. "Thou, O Lord, knowest me; thou hast seen "me, and tried mine heart towards thee," saith the prophet, Jer. xii. 3.

Sometimes he tries the strength and ability of his servants graces; and thus he tried Abraham, Heb. xi. 17. And sometimes he tries the soundness and sincerity of our graces; so the *Ephesian angel* was tried, and found dross, Rev. ii. 2. And so Job was tried, and found true gold, Job xxiii. 10. These trials are not made by God for his own information; for he knows what is in man; his eyes pierce his heart and reins; but for our information; which is the true sense of Deut. viii. 2. "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God "led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, "and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart;" *i. e.* to make thee know it, by giving thee such experiments and trials of it in those wilderness straits and difficulties.

And these are the trials of grace I am here to speak of, not excluding the active trials made by ourselves; no, no, all these trials made by God upon us, are designed to put us upon the trial of ourselves: When God tries, we should try too.

Now the method into which I shall cast this discourse, shall be to shew you,

1. *First*, What those things are which try the sincerity of our graces, as fire tries gold.

2. *Secondly*, For what ends doth God put the graces of his people upon such trials in this world.

3. *Thirdly*, That such grace only is sincere as can endure these trials.

4. *Fourthly*, and *lastly*, To apply the whole, in the main uses of it.

SECT. II.

1. First, *What those things are which try the sincerity of grace, as fire tries gold.*

Before I enter into particulars, it will be needful to acquaint you, that the subject before me is full of difficulties. There is need, as one speaks, of much cautious respect to the various sizes and degrees of growth among Christians, and the vicissi-

tudes of their inward case; else we may darken and perplex the way, instead of clearing it.

The portraiture of a Christian is such as none can draw to one model, but with respect to the infancy of some, as well as the age and strength of others.

Great heed ought also to be had in the application of marks and signs; we should first try them, before we try ourselves or others by them. Marks and signs are by some distinguished into exclusive, inclusive, and positive: Exclusive marks serve to shut out bold pretenders, by shewing them how far they come short of a saving work of grace; and they are commonly taken from some necessary common duty, as hearing, praying, *&c.* He that doth not these things, cannot have any work of grace in him; and yet if he do them, he cannot from thence conclude his estate to be gracious: He that so concludes, deceives himself.

Inclusive marks rather discover the degrees than the truth of grace, and are rather intended for comfort than for conviction: If we find them in ourselves, we do not only find sincerity, but eminency of grace: They being taken from some raised degree and eminent acts of grace in confirmed and grown Christians.

Betwixt the two former there is a middle sort of marks, which are called positive marks, and they are such as are always, and only found, in regenerate souls: The hypocrite hath them not; the grown Christian hath them, and that in an eminent degree: The poorest Christian hath them in a lower, but saving degree: Great care must be taken in the application of them. And it is past doubt, that many weak and injudicious Christians have been greatly prejudiced by finding the experiences of eminent Christians proposed as rules to measure their sincerity by. Alas! these no more fit their souls, than Saul's armour did David's body.

These things being premised, and a due care carried along with us through this discourse, I shall next come to the particulars, and shew you what those things are which discover the state and tempers of our souls. And though it be true, that there is no condition we are in, no providence that befals us, but it takes some proof, and makes some discovery of our hearts; yet, to limit this discourse, and fall into particulars as soon as we can, I shall shew what trials are made of our graces in this world, by our prosperity, and our adversity; by our corruptions, and our duties; and, lastly, by our sufferings upon the score and account of religion.

SECT. III.

FIrſt, Proſperity, ſucceſs, and the increaſe of outward enjoyments, are to grace what fire is to gold. Riches and honours make trial what we are; and by theſe things many a falſe heart hath been detected, as well as the ſincerity and eminency of other graces diſcovered. We may fancy the fire of proſperity to be rather for comfort than trial; to refreſh us rather than to prove us; but you will find proſperity to be a great diſcovery, and that ſcarce any thing proves the truth and ſtrength of mens graces and corruptions more than that doth: *Rara virtus eſt humilitas honorata*, ſaith Bernard; to find humility with honour, is to find a phoenix. Let an obſcure perſon be lifted up to honour, and how ſteady and well compoſed ſoever he was before, it is a thouſand to one but his eyes will dazzle, and his head run round when he is upon the lofty pinacle of praiſe and honour *; Prov. xxvii. 21. "As the fining-pot for ſilver, and "the furnace for gold, ſo is a man to his praiſe:" Put the beſt gold into the fining-pot of praiſe, and it is a great wonder if a great deal of droſs do not appear, Iſa. xxxix. 2. the vain-glory of good Hezekiah roſe like a froth or ſcum upon the pot, when heated by proſperity. It was ſuch a fining-pot to Herod, as diſcovered him to be droſs itſelf, Acts xii. 23. How did that poor worm ſwell under that trial into the conceit of a god, and was juſtly deſtroyed by worms, becauſe he forgat himſelf to be one? We little think what a ſtrange alteration an exalted ſtate will make upon our ſpirits. When the prophet would abate the vain confidence of Hazael, who would not believe that ever he ſhould be turned into ſuch a ſavage beaſt as the prophet had foretold; he only tells him, "The Lord hath ſhewed me, "that thou ſhalt be king over Syria," 2 Kings viii. 13. The meaning is, Do not be too confident Hazael, that thy temper and diſpoſition can never alter to that degree; thou never yet ſat on a throne: When men ſee the crown upon thy head, then they will better ſee the true temper of thy heart.

How humble was Iſrael in the wilderneſs, tame and tractable in a lean paſture; but bring them once into Canaan, and the world is ſtrangely altered; then, "we are lords, (ſay they) we "will come no more unto thee," Jer. ii. 2, 7, 31. Proſperity is a criſis both to grace and corruption. Thence is that caution to Iſrael, Deut. x. 11, 12. "When thou haſt eaten, and art "full, then beware leſt thou forget the Lord thy God." Then

* *Magiſtratus indicat virum: i. e.* Preferment proves a man.

beware, that is the critical time; surely, that man must be acknowledged rich, very rich in grace, whose grace suffers no diminution, or eclipse by his riches; and that man deserves double honour, whose pride the honours of this world cannot provoke and inflame.

It was a sad truth from the lips of a pious divine in Germany upon his death bed; being somewhat disconsolate, by reflecting upon the barrenness of his life, some friends took thence an occasion to commend him, and mind him of his painful ministry, and fruitful life among them; but he cried out, *Auferte ignem, adhuc enim paleas habeo;* Withdraw the fire, for I have chaff in me; meaning, that he felt his ambition like chaff catching fire from the sparkles of their praises. Like unto which was the saying of another, *He that praiseth me, wounds me.*

But to descend into the particular discoveries that prosperity and honour make of the want of grace in some, and of the weakness of grace in others; I will shew you what symptoms of hypocrisy appear upon some men under the trial of prosperity, and what signs of grace appear in others under the same trial.

SECT. IV.

PRosperity discovers many sad symptoms of a naughty heart; and, among others, these are ordinarily most conspicuous.

1. *First,* It casts the hearts of some men into a deep oblivion of God, and makes them lay aside all care of duty; *Rare fumant fœlicibus arae;* the altars of rich men seldom smoke, Deut. xxxii. 13, 14, 15. Jesurun sucked honey out of the rock, eat the fat of lambs, and kidneys of wheat: But what was the effect of this; he kicked, and forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. Instead of lifting up their hearts in an humble thankful acknowledgment of God's bounty, they lifted up the heel in a wanton abuse of his mercy: In the fattest earth we find the most slippery footing.

He that is truly gracious may, in prosperity, remit some degrees; but a carnal heart there loseth all that which in a low condition he seemed to have. Augur's deprecation, as to himself, no doubt, was built upon his frequent observation how it was with others; Prov. xxx. 8, 9. "Lest I be full, and deny "God."

It is said in Eccles. v. 12. "That the abundance of the rich "will not suffer him to sleep;" and I wish that were the worst injury it did him; but, alas! it will not suffer him to pray, to

meditate, to allow time and thoughts about his eternal concernments; he falls asleep in the lap of prosperity, and forgets that there is a God to be served, or a soul to be saved. O this is a dangerous symptom of a very graceless heart!

2. *Secondly*, Prosperity meeting with a graceless heart, makes it wholly sensual, and entirely swallows up its thoughts and affections: Earthly things transform and mould their hearts into their own similitude and nature: The whole strength of their souls goes out to those enjoyments. So those graceless, yet prosperous persons are described, Job xxi. 11, 12, 13. "They "take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the "organ: they spend their days in wealth." *They take the timbrel*, not the Bible. "They rejoice at the sound of the "organ;" not a word of their rejoicing in God. "They "send forth their little ones in the dance:" That is all the catechism they are taught: "They spend their days in wealth;" their whole time, that precious stock and talent, is wholly laid out upon these sensitive things: Either the pleasure of it powerfully charms them, or the cares of it wholly engross their minds, that there is no time to spare for God. *They live in pleasure upon earth*, as it is, Jam. v. 5. just as the fish lives in the water, its proper element: Take him off from these things, and put him upon spiritual, serious, heavenly employments, and he is *Piscis in arido*; Like a fish upon the dry land.

Now, though prosperity may too much influence and ensnare the minds of good men, and estrange them too much from heavenly things; yet thus to engross their hearts, and convert them into their own similitude and nature, so that these things should be the centre of their hearts, the very proper element in which they live, is utterly impossible.

An hypocrite indeed may be brought to this, because, though Janus like, he have two faces, yet he really hath but one principle, and that is wholly carnal and earthly: So that it is easy to make all the water to run into one channel, to gather all into one entire stream, in which his heart shall pour out all its strength to the creature.

But a Christian indeed hath a double principle that acts him; though he have a law of sin that moves him one way, yet there is in him also the law of grace, which thwarts and crosses that principle of corruption: So that as grace cannot do what it would, because of sin; so neither can sin do what it would, because of grace, Gal. v. 17.

The heart of a Christian, in the midst of ensnaring sensitive

enjoyments, finds indeed a corrupt principle in it, which would incline him to fall asleep upon such a soft pillow, and forget God and duty; but it cannot, O no! it cannot do so; there is a principle of grace within him, that never leaves jogging, disturbing, and calling upon him, till he rise and return to his God, the true rest of his soul.

3. *Thirdly*, A false pretender to religion, an hypocritical professor, meeting with prosperity and success, grows altogether unconcerned about the interest of religion, and senseless of the calamities of God's people. Thus the prophet convinces the Jews of their hypocrisy, Amos vi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. "They "were at ease in Zion, and trusted in the mountain of Samaria:" And so, having a shadow of religion, and a fulness of all earthly things, they fell to feasting and sporting: "They drank "wine in bowls, and anointed themselves with the chief ointments, but were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." They condoled not, Gnalsheber, over the breakings or tearing to pieces of Joseph: If they are out of danger once, let the church shift for itself, they are secure in a warm nest: Let the birds of prey catch and devour that flock with which they sometimes associated, they are not touched with it. Moses could not do so, though in the greatest security and confluence of the honours and pleasures of Egypt, Acts vii. 23. Nehemiah could not do so, though the servant and favourite of a mighty monarch, and wanted nothing to make him outwardly happy; yet the pleasures of a king's court could not cheer his heart, or scatter the clouds of sorrow from his countenance, whilst his brethren were in affliction, and the city of his God lay waste, Nehemiah ii. 1, 2, 3. Nor indeed can any gracious heart be unconcerned and senseless; for that union that all the saints have with Christ their head, and with one another, as fellow members in Christ, will beget sympathy among them in their sufferings, 1 Cor. xii. 26.

SECT. V.

BUT as the fire of prosperity discovers this and much more dross in a graceless heart, so it discovers the sincerity and grace of God's people: I say not that it discovers nothing but grace in them: O that it did not! alas! many of them have had a great deal of dross and corruption discovered by it, as was noted before: But yet in this trial, the graciousness and uprightness of their hearts will appear in these, and such like workings of it.

1. *First*, Under prosperity, success, and honour, the upright

heart will labour to suppress pride, and keep itself lowly and humble; and still the more grace there is, the more humility there will be. If God lift him up, he will lay himself low, and exalt his God high. So did Jacob when God had raised and enlarged him; Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy of the "least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast "shewed unto thy servant, for with my staff I passed over this "Jordan, and now I am become two bands."

Great was the difference in Jacob's outward condition at his return, from what it was at his first passage over Jordan; then poor, now rich; then single and comfortless, now the head of a great family: Yea, but though his outward estate was altered, the frame of his heart was not altered. Jacob was an holy and humble man when he went out, and so he was when he returned: He saw a multitude of mercies about him, and among them all not one but was greater than himself.

I dare not say every Christian under prosperity can at all times manifest like humility; but I am sure what pride and vanity soever may rise in a gracious heart tried by prosperity, there is that within him will give check to it: He dare not suffer such proud thoughts to lodge quietly in his heart; for, alas! he sees that in himself, and that in his God, that will abase him: Grace will make him look back to his original condition, and say, with David, "What am I, O Lord God? and what "is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" 2 Sam. vii. 18.

It will make him look in, and see the baseness of his own heart, and the corruptions that are there, and admire at the dealings of God with so vile a creature. O, thinks he, if others did but know what I know of myself, they would abhor me more than now they esteem and value me.

2. *Secondly*, Prosperity usually draws forth the saints love to the God of their mercies: that which heats a wicked man's lusts, warms a gracious man's heart with love and delight in God.

These were the words of that lovely song which David sang in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul; and he said, "I will "love thee, O Lord, my strength," Psalm xviii. title and ver. 1. compared. These outward things are not the main grounds and motives of their love to God; no, no, they love him when he takes away, as well as when he gives: but they are sanctified instruments to inflame their love to God: they boil up a wicked man's lusts, but they melt a gracious man's soul. O in what a

ſity hath made them bare, every body may ſee them without ſearching.

But to fall into cloſer particulars; it will be neceſſary to enquire what effects of adverſity are common to both the ſound and the unſound; and then what are proper to either in this cloſe trial by adverſity.

SECT. II.

IT will be expedient to the deſign I manage in this diſcourſe, to ſhew in the firſt place what are the common effects of adverſity to both the godly and ungodly; for in ſome things they differ not, but as it is with the one, ſo alſo with the other: As,

1. *Firſt*, Both the godly and ungodly may fear adverſity before it comes: to be ſure a wicked man cannot, and it is evident many godly men do not, come up to the height of that rule, James i. 2. "To account it all joy when they fall into di-" verſe temptations," or trials by adverſity.

It is ſaid, Iſa. xxxiii. 14. "The ſinners in Zion are afraid; "trembling ſurprizeth the hypocrite;" namely, under the apprehenſion of approaching calamities; and it is true alſo, the ſaints in Zion may be afraid: "My fleſh trembleth for fear of "thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments," ſaid holy David, Pſal. cxix. 120. and Job iii. 23. "The thing which I greatly "feared (ſaith that upright ſoul) is come upon me." There is a vaſt difference betwixt a ſaint's firſt meeting with afflictions, and his parting with them; he entertains them ſometimes with trembling; he parts with them rejoicing, ſmiling on them, and bleſſing them in the name of the Lord. So that by this the upright, and the falſe heart, are not diſcriminated; even ſanctified nature declines ſuffering and troubles.

2. *Secondly*, Both the godly and ungodly may entertain afflictions with regret and unwillingneſs when they come. Afflictions and troubles are wormwood and gall, Lam. iii. 19. And that goes not down pleaſantly with fleſh and blood, Heb. xii. 11. "No affliction for the preſent ſeemeth joyous, but "grievous;" he means to God's own people; they are in heavineſs through manifold temptations or trials by the rod, 1 Pet. i. 6. When God gives the cup of affliction into the hands of the wicked, how do they reluctate and loath it? How do their ſtomachs riſe at it? And though the portion of the ſaints cup be much ſweeter than theirs, (for that bitter ingredient of God's vindictive wrath is not in it), yet even they ſhrink from it, and loth they are to taſte it.

3. *Thirdly*, Both the one and other may be impatient and fretful in adverſity; it is the very nature of fleſh and blood to be ſo. "The wicked are like the troubled ſea, which cannot "reſt, whoſe waters caſt forth mire and dirt," Iſa. lvii. 20. It is an alluſion to the unſtable and ſtormy ocean: you know there is naturally an eſtuation and working in the ſea, whether it be incenſed by the wind or no; but if a violent wind blow upon the unquiet ocean, O what a raging and foaming is there! what abundance of traſh and filth doth it at ſuch times caſt out!

Now, though grace make a great difference betwixt one and another, yet I dare not ſay, but even a gracious heart may be very unquiet and tumultuous in the day of affliction. Sanctified ſouls have their paſſions and luſts which are too little mortified; even as ſweat-briar and holy-thiſtles have their prickles, as well as the worthleſs bramble. Jonah was a good man, yet his ſoul was ſadly diſtempered by adverſe providences; Jonah iv. 9. "Yea, (ſaith he, and that to his God) I do well to be angry, "even unto death."

4. *Fourthly*, Both the one and the other may be weary of the rod, and think the day of adverſity a tedious day, wiſhing it were once at an end. Babylon ſhall be weary of the evil that God will bring upon it, Jer. li. *ult.* And O that none of Zion's children were weary of adverſity too! How ſad a moan doth Job make of his long continued affliction, Job xvi. 6, 7. "Though I ſpeak, my grief is not aſſuaged; and though I "forbear, what am I eaſed? But now he hath made me "weary."

And if you look into Pſalm vi. 3, 6. you may ſee another ſtrong Chriſtian even tired in the way of affliction: "My ſoul "(ſaith David in that place) is ſore vexed, but thou, O Lord, "how long? I am weary with my groaning."

5. *Fifthly*, Both the one and the other may be driven to their knees by adverſity. "Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee; "they have poured out a prayer when thy chaſtening was up-"on them," Iſa. xxvi. 16. Not that a godly perſon will pray no longer than the rod is at his back; O no, he cannot live without prayer long, how few calls ſoever he hath to that duty by the rod; but when the rod is on his back, he will be more frequently and more fervently upon his knees; indeed many graceleſs hearts are like childrens tops, which will go no longer than they are whipt; they cannot find their knees and their tongues, till God find a rod to excite them. A dangerous ſymptom. The ſame affliction may put a gracious, and a grace-

leſs ſoul to their knees; but though in the external matter of duty, and in the external call or occaſion of duty, they ſeem to agree, yet is there a vaſt difference in the principles, manner, and ends of theſe their duties; as will evidently appear in its proper place in our following diſcourſe.

But by what hath been ſaid in this ſection, you may ſee how in ſome things the holy upright ſoul acts too like the unſanctified, and in other things how much the hypocrite may act like a ſaint; he may be externally humbled, ſo was Ahab; he may pray under the rod, Mal. ii. 13. yea, and requeſt others to pray for him, ſo did Simon, Acts viii. 24.

SECT. III.

BUT though the ſound and unſound heart differ not in ſome external carriages under the rod, yet there are effects of adverſity which are proper to either, and will diſcriminate them. To which end let us firſt ſee what effects adverſity is uſually followed withal in unſound and carnal hearts; and we ſhall find among others, theſe five ſymptoms of a naughty heart appearing under croſſes and afflictions.

1. *Firſt*, A graceleſs heart is not quickly and eaſily brought to ſee the hand of God in thoſe troubles that befal it, and be duly affected with it; Iſa. xxvi. 11. "Lord, when thy hand is "lifted up, they will not ſee:" when it has ſmitten, or is lifted up to ſmite, they ſhut their eyes; it is the malice of this man, or the negligence of that, or the unfaithfulneſs of another, that hath brought all this trouble upon me. Thus the creature is the horizon that terminates their ſight, and beyond that they uſually ſee nothing. Sometimes indeed the hand of God is ſo immediately manifeſted, and convincingly diſcovered in afflictions, that they cannot avoid the ſight of it; and then they may, in their way, pour out a prayer before him; but ordinarily they impute all to ſecond cauſes, and overlook the firſt cauſe of their troubles.

2. *Secondly*, Nor is it uſual with theſe men under the rod to retire into their cloſets, and ſearch their hearts there, to find out the particular cauſe and provocation of their affliction: "No man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, What have "I done?" Jer. viii. 6. What curſed thing is there with me, that hath thus incenſed the anger of God againſt me! God viſits their iniquities with afflictions, but they viſit not their own hearts by ſelf-examinations. God judges them, but they judge not themſelves: He ſhews their iniquities in a clear glaſs, but none ſaith, *What have I done?* This phraſe, *What have I*

done? is the voice of one that recollects himself after a rash action; of the voice of a man astonished at the discovery afflictious make of his sins; but no such voice as this is ordinarily heard among carnal men.

3. *Thirdly*, An unsound professor, if left to his choice, would rather chuse sin than affliction; and sees more evil in that, than in this.

And it cannot be doubted, if we consider the principle by which all unregenerate men are acted, is sense, not faith. Hence Job's friends would have argued his hypocrisy, Job xxxvi. 21. And had their application been as right as their rule, it would have concluded it; *This* (*viz.* sin) *hast thou chosen, rather than affliction.*

I do not say that an upright man cannot commit a moral evil, to escape a penal evil. O that daily observation did not too plentifully furnish us with sad instances of that kind! But upright ones do not, dare not, upon a serious deliberate discussion and debate, chuse sin rather than affliction; what they may do upon surprisals, and in the violence of temptation, is of another nature.

But a false and unsound heart discovers itself in the choice it makes upon deliberation, and that frequently when sin and trouble come in competition. Put the case, saith Augustine, a ruffian should with one hand set the cup of drunkenness to thy mouth, and with the other a dagger to thy breast, and say, drink or die; thou shouldest rather chuse to die sober, than to live a drunkard: And many Christians have resisted unto blood, striving against sin, and, with renowned Moses, chosen affliction, the worst of afflictions, yea, death itself in the most formidable appearance, rather than sin; and it is the habitual temper and resolution of every gracious heart so to do, though those holy resolutions are sometimes over-borne by violence of temptation.

But the hypocrite dreads less the defilement of his soul, than the loss of his estate, liberty, or life. If you ask upon what ground then doth the apostle suppose, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. a man may give his body to be burnt, and not have charity; that the *salamander* of hypocrisy may live in the flame of martyrdom? The answer is at hand; They that chuse death in the sense of this text, do not chuse it to escape sin, but to feed and indulge it. Those strange adventures (if any such be) are rather to maintain their own honour, and enrol their names among worthy and famous persons to posterity; or out of a blind zeal

to their eſpouſed errors and miſtakes, than in a due regard to the glory of God, and the preſervation of integrity. 'I fear to 'ſpeak it, but it muſt be ſpoken, (ſaith * Hierom), That even 'martyrdom itſelf, when ſuffered for admiration and applauſe, 'profits nothing, but that blood is ſhed in vain.'

4. *Fourthly*, It is the property of an unregenerate ſoul, under adverſity, to turn from creature to creature for ſupport and comfort, and not from every creature to God alone. So long as their feet can touch ground, I mean, feel any creature relief or comfort under them, they can ſubſiſt and live in afflictions; but when they loſe ground, when all creature refuge fails, then their hearts fail too.

Thus Zedekiah, and the ſelf-deceiving Jews, when they ſaw their own ſtrength failed them, and there was little hope left that they ſhould deliver themſelves from the Chaldeans, what do they in that ſtrait? Do they, with upright Jehoſhaphat ſay, "Our eyes are unto thee?" No, no, their eyes were upon Egypt for ſuccour, not upon Heaven; well, Pharaoh and his aids are left ſtill, all hope is not gone, Jer. xxxvii. 9. See the like in Ahaz, in a ſore plunge and diſtreſs he courts the king of Aſſyria for help, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22, 23. That project failing, why then he will try what the gods of Damaſcus can do for him; any way rather than the right way, *Flectere ſi nequeam ſuperos, Acheronta movebo.*

So it is with many others: if one child die, what do they do, run to God, and comfort themſelves in this, the Lord liveth, though my child die. If an eſtate be loſt, and a family ſinking, do they with David comfort themſelves in the everlaſting covenant, ordered and ſure? No, no; but if one relation die, there is another alive; if an eſtate be loſt, yet not all; ſomething is left ſtill, and the caſe will mend.

As long as ever ſuch men have any viſible encouragement, they will hang upon it; and not make up all in Chriſt, and encourage themſelves in the Lord. To tell them of rejoicing in the Lord, when the fig-tree bloſſoms not, is what they cannot underſtand.

5. *Fifthly*, To conclude; an unſound heart never comes out of the furnace of affliction purged, mortified, and more ſpiritual and holy than when he was caſt into it; his ſcum and droſs is not there ſeparated from him; nay, the more they are afflic-

* *Timeo dicere, ſed dicendum eſt: martyrium ipſum ſi ideo fiat, ut admirationi et laudi habeatur a fratribus; fruſtra ſanguis effuſus eſt.* Hier.

ted, the worſe they are. "Why ſhould ye be ſmitten any "more? ye will revolt more and more," Iſa. i. 5. And, to keep to our metaphor, conſult Jer. vi. 29. God had put that incorrigible people into the furnace of affliction, and kept them long in that fire; and what was the iſſue? Why, ſaith the prophet, "The bellows are burnt, the lead is conſumed of the "fire, the founder melteth in vain, *&c.* reprobate ſilver ſhall "men call them, becauſe the Lord hath rejected them."

If the fire of affliction be continually blown till the very bellows be burnt, that is, the tongue, or rather the lungs of the prophet, which have ſome reſemblance to bellows; though theſe be even ſpent in reproving, and threatening, and denouncing woe upon woe, and judgment upon judgment; and God fulfils his word upon them; yet ſtill they are as before; the droſs remains: though Jeruſalem be made a furnace, and the inhabitants the fleſh boiling in it, as is noted (pertinently to my diſcourſe) in Ezek. xxiv. 6, 13. *the ſcum remains with them*, and cannot be ſeparated by the fire; and the reaſon is plain, becauſe no affliction in itſelf purges ſin, but as it is ſanctified, and works in the virtue of God's bleſſing, and in purſuance of the promiſes.

O think on this you that have had thouſands of afflictions in one kind and another, and none of them all have done you good; they have not mortified, humbled, or benefited you at all: And thus you ſee what the effects of adverſity are, when it meets with a graceleſs heart.

SECT. IV.

BY this time, reader, I ſuppoſe thou art deſirous to know what effects adverſity and affliction uſe to have when they meet with an honeſt and ſincere heart: Only, before I come to particulars, I think it needful to acquaint thee, that the fruits of afflictions are moſtly after-fruits, and not ſo diſcernable by the Chriſtian himſelf under the rod, as after he hath been exerciſed by it, Heb. xii. 11. and calmly reflects upon what is paſt; nor doth every Chriſtian attain the ſame meaſure and degree; ſome rejoice, others commonly ſubmit; but I think theſe ſeven effects are ordinarily found in all upright hearts that paſs under the rod.

1. *Firſt*, The ſincere and upright ſoul betakes itſelf to God in affliction; Job i. 20. When God was ſmiting, Job was praying; when God afflicted, Job worſhipped: So David, Pſalm cxvi. 3, 4. "I found ſorrow and trouble, then called I

" upon the name of the Lord." And when the meſſenger of Satan buffeted Paul, " For this cauſe (ſaith he) I beſought the " Lord thrice," 2 Cor. xii. 8. Alas! whither ſhould a child go in diſtreſs, but to its father?

2. *Secondly*, He ſees and owns the hand of God in his afflictions, how much or little ſoever of the inſtruments of trouble appear. *The Lord hath taken away*, ſaith Job, Job i. 21. *God hath bidden him*, ſaith David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. If the blow come from the hand of a wicked man, yet he ſees that wicked hand in God's righteous hand, Pſalm xvii. 14. And this apprehenſion is fundamental to all that communion men have with God in their afflictions, and to all that peaceableneſs and gracious ſubmiſſion of their ſpirits under the rod: He that ſees nothing of God in his troubles, hath nothing of God in his ſoul.

3. *Thirdly*, He can juſtify God in all the afflictions and troubles that come upon him, be they never ſo levere. " Thou " art juſt in all that is brought upon us," ſaith Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 33. " Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniqui- " ties deſerve," ſaith Ezra, Ezra ix. 13. " It is of the Lord's " mercy we are not conſumed," ſaith the church, Lam. iii. 22. Are we in Babylon? It is a mercy we are not in hell. If God condemn him, yet he will juſtify God; if God caſt him into a ſea of trouble, yet he will acknowledge, in all that ſea of trouble, there is not one drop of injuſtice. If I have not deſerved ſuch uſage from the hands of men, yet I have deſerved worſe than this at the hands of God.

4. *Fourthly*, Afflictions uſe to melt and humble gracious hearts; there is an habitual tenderneſs planted in their ſpirits, and a juſt occaſion quickly draws it forth: And ſo uſual a thing it is for gracious hearts to be humbled under the afflictings of God, that affliction is upon that ſcore called humiliation: The effect put for the cauſe, to ſhew where one is, the other will be, 2 Cor. xii. 21. *My God will humble me*, *i. e.* he will afflict me with the ſight of your ſins and diſorders; and if a gracious ſoul be ſo apt to be humbled for other mens ſins, much more for his own.

5. *Fifthly*, The upright ſoul is inquiſitive under the rod, to find out that evil for which the Lord contends with him by affliction; Job x. 2. " Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with " me:" And Job xxxiv. 32. " That which I ſee not, teach " thou me: If I have done iniquity I will do no more." So Lam. iii. 39, 40. " Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn a- " gain to the Lord." In afflicting, God ſearches them, and under affliction they ſearch themſelves: Willing they are to hear

the voice of the rod, and glad of any discovery it makes of their hearts.

Sixthly, The upright heart chuseth so ly under affliction, rather than to be delivered from it by sin. I say, this is the choice and resolution of every upright heart, however it may be sometimes over-borne by the violence of temptation, Heb. xi. 35. *Not accepting deliverance, viz.* upon sinful terms and conditions.

They are sensible how the flesh smarts under the rod, but had rather it should smart, than conscience should smart under guilt. Affliction, saith an upright soul, grieves me, but sin will grieve God; affliction wounds my flesh, but sin will wound my soul. Deliverance I long for, but I will not pay so dear for it, how much soever I desire it: *Nolo tanti emere pœnitentiam*: Outward ease is sweet, but inward peace is sweeter.

7. *Seventhly*, He prizeth the spiritual good gotten by affliction, above deliverance from it, and can bless God from his heart for those mercies, how dear soever his flesh hath paid for them; Psalm cxix. 67, and 71. "It is good for me that I have "been afflicted." Such is the value the people of God have for spiritual graces, that they cannot think them dear, whatever their flesh hath paid for them. The mortification of one lust, one discovery of sincerity, one manifestation of God to their souls, doth much more than make amends for all that they have endured under the rod.

Is patience improved, self-acquaintance increased, the vanity of the creature more effectually taught, longings after heaven inflamed? O blessed afflictions, that are attended with such blessed fruits! It was the saying of a holy man, under a sore trouble for the death of an only son, when in that dark day God had graciously manifested himself to his soul; 'O, (saith he) I 'would be contented, if it were possible, to lay an only son in 'the grave every day I have to live in the world, for one such 'discovery of the love of God as I now enjoy.'

CHAP. VI.

Shewing indwelling ſin to be to grace, what fire is to gold; and how the ſoundneſs and unſoundneſs of our hearts are diſcovered by our carriage towards it.

SECT. I.

PRoſperity and adverſity put ſincerity to the trial; but nothing makes a deeper ſearch into our boſoms, nothing ſifts our ſpirits more narrowly, or tells us what our ſtate is more plainly, than our behaviour towards that corruption that dwells in us; the thorn is next neighbour to the roſe: Sin and grace dwell not only in the ſame ſoul, but in the ſame faculties. The collier and fuller dwell in one room; what one cleanſeth the other blacks. Of all the evils God permits in this world, none is more grievous to his people than this: They ſometimes wonder why the Lord will ſuffer it to be ſo; why, ſurely, among other wiſe and holy ends of this permiſſion, theſe are ſome.

They are left to try you, and to humble you: There is no intrinſical goodneſs in ſin; but, however, in this it occaſions good to us, that by our carriage towards it, we diſcern our ſincerity. The touchſtone is a worthleſs ſtone in itſelf, but it ſerves to try the gold; 1 John iii. 9, 10. "Whoſoever is born "of God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him, "and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God: In this the "children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil:" *q. d.* In reſpect of their carriage towards ſin, the one and other is plainly manifeſted: This is that which ſeparates the droſs from the gold, and ſhews you what the true ſtate of men's perſons, and tempers of their hearts is. By not ſinning, we are not to underſtand a total freedom from it in this world, as if it implied any ſuch perfection of the people of God in this world; that is the Popiſh and Pelagian ſenſe: Nor yet muſt we take it in the Arminian ſenſe, who, to avoid the argument of the orthodox, will underſtand it of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. What a ſtrange thing would it be, to make that a characteriſtical note of diſtinction betwixt the godly and ungodly, which ſo very few, even of the moſt ungodly, are ever guilty of?

But the manner of our behaviour towards ſin, and our carriage towards it before, or under, or after the commiſſion of it, in that the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil.

Now, there are five things relating to ſin, that diſcriminate and mark the ſtate of the perſons: The difference is diſcernible.

In our
1. Abſtinence from ſin.
2. Hatred of ſin.
3. Trouble about ſin.
4. Subjection to ſin.
5. Oppoſition of ſin.

SECT. II.

(1.) THE grounds and motives of our abſtinence do very clearly manifeſt the ſtate of our ſouls; what they are in the regenerate and unregenerate, is our next work: And let it be conſidered,

1. *Firſt*, That an unſound and unrenewed heart may abſtain from one ſin, becauſe it is contrary to, and inconſiſtent with another ſin: For, it is with the ſins of our natures, as it is with the diſeaſes of our bodies: Though all diſeaſes be contrary to health, yet ſome diſeaſes, as the fever and palſy, are contrary to each other. So are prodigality and covetouſneſs, hypocriſy and profaneneſs. Theſe oppoſe each other, not for mutual deſtruction, as ſin and grace do, but for ſuperiority, each contending for the throne, and ſometimes taking it by turns. It is with ſuch perſons as with that poſſeſſed man, Matth. xvii. 15. whom the ſpirit caſts ſometimes into the fire, ſometimes into the water: Or if one ſubdue the other, yet the heart is alſo ſubdued to the vaſſalage of that luſt that is uppermoſt in the ſoul.

2. *Secondly*, An unrenewed ſoul may be kept from the commiſſion of ſome ſin, not becauſe there is a principle of grace within him, but becauſe of ſome providential reſtraint without him, or upon him: For, it often falls out, that when men have conceived ſin, and are ready to execute it, providence claps on the fetters of reſtraint, and hinders them from ſo doing.

This was the caſe with Abimelech, Gen. xx. 6, and 17. compared, *I with-held thee*: And though perſons ſo reſtrained, have not the good of ſuch providences, yet others have; for by it a world of miſchief is prevented in the world, which otherwiſe would break out; and to this act of providence we owe our lives, liberties, eſtates, and comforts in this world.

3. *Thirdly*, An unſound heart may not commit ſome ſins, not becauſe he truly hates them, but becauſe his conſtitution in-

clines him not to them: Theſe men are rather beholden to a good temper of body, than to a gracious temper of ſoul. Some men cannot be drunkards if they would, others cannot be covetous and baſe; they are made *e meliori luto*, of a more refined metal than others; but chaſte and liberal, juſt and ſober nature, is but nature ſtill: The beſt nature, in all its endowments, is but nature at the beſt.

4. *Fourthly*, A graceleſs heart may be reſtrained from ſin by the force of education and principles of morality that way inſtilled into it. Thus Jehoaſh was reſtrained from ſin, 2 Kings xii. 2. "And Jehoaſh did that which was right in the ſight of "the Lord, all the days wherein Jehoiadah the prieſt inſtructed "him." The fear of a parent or maſter will do a great deal more with ſome in this caſe than the fear of God. The influence of a ſtrict education nips off the excreſcencies of budding vice. The way we are taught when young, we keep when old: This is the influence of man upon man, not the influence of the regenerating Spirit upon men.

5. *Fifthly*, A graceleſs heart may be kept from ſome ſins by the fear of the events, both in this world, and that to come. Sin that is followed with infamy and reproach among men, may on this ground be forborn; not becauſe God hath forbidden it, but becauſe human laws will puniſh it, and the ſober world will brand us for it: And ſome look farther, to the puniſhment of ſin in hell; they are not afraid to ſin, but they are afraid to burn.

Here ſin is like a ſweet roſe in a brake of thorns; fain we would have it, but we are loth to tear our fleſh to come by it. It is good that ſin is prevented any way; but to be kept on this ground from ſin, doth not argue the eſtate of the perſon to be good: And thus you ſee ſome of the grounds on which carnal men are reſtrained; and in this "the children of the devil are "manifeſt."

SECT. III.

BUT there are grounds of abſtinence from ſin, by which "the children of God are alſo manifeſted;" and ſuch are theſe that follow:

1. *Firſt*, A ſincere heart dares not ſin becauſe of the eye and fear of God, which is upon him: So you find it in Joſ xxxi. 1, and 4. he durſt not allow his thoughts to ſin, becauſe he lived under the awe of God's eye. Nehemiah durſt not do as former governors had done, though an opportunity preſented to enrich himſelf, *becauſe of the fear of his God*, Nehem. v.

29. The soul that lives under the awe of this eye will be as conscientious where no discovery can be made by creatures, as if all the world looked on, Levit. xix. 14. "Thou shalt not "curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind; "but shalt fear thy God, I am the Lord."

What if a man do curse the deaf, the deaf cannot hear him, and what if he do put a stumbling-block before the blind, the blind cannot see him: True, but God sees him, God hears him; that is enough to a man that hath the fear of the Lord upon his heart.

2. *Secondly*, As the fear of God, so the love of God, is a principle of restraint from sin to the soul that is upright. This kept back Joseph from sin, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do "this great wickedness, and sin against God?" *How can I?* He speaks as a man that feels himself bound up from sin by the goodness and love of God, that had been manifested to him, q. d. Hath he delivered me from the pit into which my envious brethren cast me? Hath he, in so miraculous a way, advanced me to all this honour and power in Egypt? and now, after all his kindness and love to me, shall I sin against him? O how can I do this against so good, so gracious a God? So Psal. xcvii. 10. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Love will cry out in the hour of temptation, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Dost thou thus requite the Lord for all his kindnesses?

3. *Thirdly*, As the love of God, so the intrinsical evil and filthiness that is in sin keeps back the gracious soul from it, Rom. xii. 9. "Abhor that which is evil," ἀποστυγοῦντες τὸ πονηρὸν, hate it as hell itself: Or, as the French translation hath it, be in horror. As the apprehensions of hell, so the apprehensions of sin impress horror upon the mind that is sanctified: Nothing more loathsome to an holy soul. Its aversations from it are with the highest indignation and loathing.

4. *Fourthly*, The renewed nature of a saint restrains him from sin; Gal. v. 17. "The spirit lusteth against the flesh, so "that ye cannot do the thing ye would." Ye cannot, why cannot ye? because it is against your new nature.

Beloved, This is a very remarkable thing in the experience of all renewed men, That, upon the renovation of men's principles, their delights, and their aversations and loathings are laid quite cross and opposite to what they were before. In their carnal state, vain company and sinful exercises were their delight. To be separated from these, and tied to prayer, medi-

tation, heavenly diſcourſe and company; O what a bondage would that have been! Now to be tied to ſuch carnal ſociety, and reſtrained from ſuch duties of godlineſs, and the ſociety of the godly, becomes a much ſorer bondage to the ſoul.

5. *Fifthly, Experience of the bitterneſs of ſin*, is a reſtraint to a gracious heart. They that have had ſo many ſick days and ſorrowful nights for ſin as they have had, are loath to taſte that wormwood and gall again, which their ſoul hath ſtill in remembrance; 2 Cor. vii. 11. "In that ye ſorrowed "after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought!" He would not grapple with thoſe inward troubles again, he would not have the chearful light of God's countenance eclipſed again for all, and much more than all, the pleaſures that are in ſin.

6. *Sixthly*, The conſideration of the ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin, powerfully withholds a gracious ſoul from the commiſſion of it; Rom. vi. 6. "Our old man is crucified with him, that "the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould "not ſerve ſin." Were there a knife or ſword in the houſe that had been thruſt through the heart of your father, would you ever endure the ſight of it? Sin was the ſword that pierced Chriſt, and ſo the death of Chriſt becomes the death of ſin in his people. Thus the children of God and the children of the devil are manifeſt, in the principles and reaſons of their abſtinence from ſin.

SECT. IV.

(2.) *Secondly*, They are alſo manifeſted by their hatred of ſin. This puts a clear diſtinction betwixt them; for no falſe or unregenerate heart can hate ſin as ſin; he may indeed,

1. *Firſt*, Hate ſin in another, but not in himſelf: Thus one proud man hates another; *Calco ſuperbiam Platonis*, ſaid Diogenes, when he trampled Plato's fine clothes under foot; I ſpurn the pride of Plato. *Sed majori ſuperbia*, as Plato ſmartly replied, Thou trampleſt upon my pride, but it is with greater pride. "Why (ſaith Chriſt to the hypocrite) "beholdeſt thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but conſider-"eſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Matth. vii. 3. How quick in eſpying, and raſh in cenſuring the ſmalleſt fault in another, is the hypocrite! it was but one fault, and that but a ſmall one, but a mote that he could find in another; yet this he quickly diſcerns: It may be there were many excellent graces in him, theſe he overlooks, but the mote he plainly diſcerns.

It may be that mote in his brother's eye, had drawn many tears from it, but these he takes no notice of; and mean while there is a beam, *i. e.* a great horrid flagitious evil, in himself; but it is too near him to be discerned or bewailed: This is a sad symptom of a naughty heart.

2. *Secondly*, He may hate it in its effects and consequents; not in its own nature; as the thief hates the gallows, not the wickedness that he hath done. It is not sin in itself, but sin in its connexion with hell, that is frightful to him.

The unsound professor could wish that there were no such threatening in the Bible against sin. When sin tempts him, I would, saith he, but I fear the consequence. O sin, could I separate thee from hell, nothing should separate thee and me.

3. *Thirdly*, He may hate it in a mood or pang, but not with a rooted habitual hatred. It is plain from 2 Pet. ii. 22. That sin may sometimes lie upon the conscience of an unregenerate man, as a load lies upon a sick stomach; and so he may discharge himself of it by reformation, restitution, *&c.* but a little time reconciles the quarrel betwixt him and his lust again: If they fall out, they will fall in again: "The dog re-"turned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her "wallowing in the mire."

But an upright soul hates sin in another manner; and in this hatred of sin the children of God are manifest.

1. *First*, The opposition of sin to God, is the very ground and formal reason upon which a gracious soul opposes and hates it. If it be opposite to the holy nature and law of God, it cannot but be odious in his eyes: This cut David's heart, Psal. li. 4. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned," *q. d.* I have wronged Uriah greatly, I have wronged myself and family greatly; but the wrong I have done to others is not worth naming, in comparison of the wrong I have done to thee.

2. *Secondly*, The upright soul hates sin in himself, more than he hates it in any other; as a man hates a serpent in the hedge, but much more in his own bosom: Rom. vii. 23. "But I see another law in my members;" and ver. 21. "I "find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present "with me:" *q. d.* I do not know how others find it, but I am sure I find sin in my very bosom, in my very bowels, it is present with me. O wretched man that I am! A gracious soul can mourn to see it in others, but to find it in himself pierceth him to the very heart.

3. *Thirdly*, The gracious soul hates not only this or that particular sin, but the whole kind, every thing that is sinful. True hatred is πρὸς τὸ γένος, * of the whole nature or kind; Psal. cxix. 104. "I hate every false way." His reasonings proceed *a quatenus ad omne*, from sin as sin, concluding against every sin; sins that are profitable and pleasant, as well as sins that have neither profit nor pleasure; sins that are secret, as well as sins that are open, and will defame him.

And, before this trial, a false heart cannot stand; for he always indulges some lust: There is an iniquity which he cannot be separated from.

4. *Fourthly*, The sincere soul hates sin with an irreconcilable hatred. There was a time when sin and his soul fell out, but there never will be a time of reconciliation betwixt them again.

That breach, which effectual conviction once made, can never be made up any more: "They will return no more to folly," Psal. lxxxv. 8. And indeed it seems to them that have suffered so much for sin, that have endured so many fears and sorrows for it, the greatest folly in the world to return to sin again: No, no, they admire the mercy of their escape from sin, to their dying day, and never look back upon their former state but with shame and grief.

Ask a convert, Would you be back again where once you were? Would you be among your old companions again? Would you be fulfilling the lusts of the flesh again? And he will tell you, he would not run the hazard, to abide one day or one night in that condition again, to gain all the kingdoms of the world the next morning.

5. *Fifthly*, The sincere soul hates sin with a superlative hatred; he hates it more than any other evil in the world besides it. Penal evils are not pleasant in themselves, but yet if he must endure them, or sin, then sufferings to chuse; Heb. xi. 25. "Chusing rather to suffer affliction than enjoy the "pleasures of sin;" the worst of sufferings rather than the best of sin.

6. *Sixthly*, To conclude; so deep is the hatred that upright ones bear to sin, that nothing pleases them more than the thoughts of a full deliverance from it doth; Rom. vii. 34. "I "thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." What doth he so heartily thank God for? O for a prospect of his final deliverance from sin, never to be entangled, defiled, or troubled with

* Arist. Rhet. lib. 2. cap. 4.

it any more: And this is one thing that sweetens death to the saints as much as any thing in the world can do, except Christ's victory over it, and lying in the grave for us. To think of a grave is not pleasant in itself; but to think of a parting-time with sin, that is sweet and pleasant indeed.

SECT. V.

(3.) *Thirdly*, The children of God and the children of the devil; pure gold and vile dross, are manifest, as in hatred of sin, so in their troubles and sorrows about sin.

All trouble for sin argues not sincerity; some have reason to be troubled even for their troubles for sin: So have they,

1. *First*, That are only troubled for the commission of some more gross sins, that startle the natural conscience, but not for inward sins, that defile the soul. Judas was troubled for betraying innocent blood, but not for that base lust of covetousness that was the root of it, or the want of sincere love to Jesus Christ; Matth. xxvii. 4, 5. Outward sins are sins *majoris infamiæ*, of greater scandal; but heart-sins are oftentimes *majoris reatus*, sins of greater guilt. To be troubled for grosser sins, and have no trouble for ordinary sins daily incurred, is an ill sign of a bad heart.

2. *Secondly*, A graceless heart may be much troubled at the discovery of sin, when it is not troubled for the guilt of sin; Jer. ii. 26. "As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is "the house of Israel ashamed." Hence it is that they stick not to commit ten sins against God, to hide one sin from the eyes of men. It is a mercy that sin is the matter of men's shame, and that all are not arrived to that height of impudence to declare their sin as Sodom, and glory in their shame: But to be ashamed only because men see it, and not with Ezra, to say, "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to look up unto "thee," Ezra ix. 6. ashamed that thou seest it, is but hypocrisy.

3. *Thirdly*, A graceless heart may be troubled for the rod that sin draws after it, but not for sin itself, as it provokes God to inflict such rods.

But the troubles of upright ones for sin are of another kind and nature.

1. *First*, They are troubled that God is wronged, and his Spirit troubled by their sins: So the penitent prodigal, "I "have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight," Luke xv. 21. Against heaven, that is, against him whose throne is in heaven, a great, glorious, and infinite Majesty! a poor worm of the earth hath lifted up his hand against the God of heaven.

2. *Secondly*, They are troubled for the defilement of their own ſouls by ſin: Hence they are compared in Proverbs xxv. 26. to a troubled fountain. You know it is the property of a living ſpring, when any filth falls into it, or that which lies in the bottom of its channel, is raiſed and defiles its ſtreams, never to leave working until it hath purged itſelf of it, and recovered its purity again.

So it is with a righteous man, he loves purity in the precept, Pſalm cxix. 140. and he loves it no leſs in the principle and practice: he thinks it is hell enough to lie under the pollution of ſin, if he ſhould never come under damnation for it.

3. *Thirdly*, They are troubled for the eſtrangements of God, and the hidings of his face from them becauſe of their ſin. It would go cloſe to an ingenuous ſpirit to ſee a dear and faithful friend whom he hath grieved, to look ſtrange and ſhy upon him at the next meeting, as if he did not know him: much more doth it go to the heart of a gracious man to ſee the face of God turned from him, and not to be towards him as in times paſt. This went to David's heart after his fall, as you may ſee, Pſalm li. 11. "Caſt me not away from thy preſence, "and take not thy holy Spirit from me;" *q. d.* Lord, if thou turn thy back upon me, and eſtrange thyſelf from me, I am a loſt man; that is the greateſt miſchief that can befal me.

4. *Fourthly*, Their troubles for ſin run deep, to what other mens do. They are ſtrong to bear other troubles, but ſink and faint under this: Pſalm xxxviii. 4. Other ſorrows may for the preſent be violent, and make more noiſe, but this ſorrow ſoaks deeper into the ſoul.

5. *Fifthly*, Their troubles for ſin are more private and ſilent troubles than others are, "their ſore runs in the night," as it is Pſalm lxxvii. 2. Not but that they may, and do open their troubles to men (and it is a mercy when they meet with a judicious, tender and experienced Chriſtian to unboſom themſelves unto) but when all is done, it is God and thy ſoul alone that muſt whiſper out the matter. *Ille vere dolet, qui ſine teſte dolet:* That is ſincere ſorrow for ſin indeed, which is expreſſed ſecretly to God in the cloſet.

6. *Sixthly*, Their troubles are incurable by creature-comforts. It is not the removing ſome outward preſſures and inconveniencies, that can remove their burden; nothing but pardon, peace, and witneſſed reconciliation, can quiet the gracious heart.

7. *Seventhly*, Their troubles for ſin are ordinate and kept in their own place; they dare not ſtamp the dignity of Chriſt's

blood upon their worthleſs tears and groans for ſin: * *Lava lachrymas, Domine:* Lord, waſh my ſinful tears in the blood of Chriſt, was once the deſire of a true penitent. And thus our trouble for ſin ſhews us what our hearts are.

SECT. VI.

(4.) *Fourthly*, The behaviour and carriage of the ſoul, with reſpect to ſubjection to the commands of ſin, ſhews what our eſtate and condition is. This will ſeparate droſs from gold. All unregenerate men are the ſervants of ſin, they ſubject themſelves to its commands. This the ſcripture ſometimes calls a "converſation in the luſts of the fleſh," Eph. ii. 3. Sometimes the "ſelling of themſelves to ſin," 1 Kings xxi. 20. Now, as † a judicious divine obſerves, though the children of God complain with Paul, Rom. vii. 14, 15. that they are "ſold under ſin," yet there is a vaſt difference betwixt theſe two: The ſaints are ſold to it by Adam, but others by their own continued conſent. But to ſhew you the difference in this matter, I conceive it neceſſary to ſhew wherein the reigning power of ſin doth not conſiſt, and then wherein it doth; that you may plainly diſcern who are in ſubjection to the reigning power of their corruptions, and who are not. Now there be divers things common both to the regenerate and unregenerate; and we cannot ſay the dominion of ſin lies in any or in all of them, *viz.* abſtractly and ſimply conſidered.

1. *Firſt*, Both one and other having original corruption dwelling in them, may alſo find this fountain breaking forth into groſs and ſcandalous ſins: But we cannot ſay that becauſe original corruption thus breaks forth into groſs and ſcandalous ſins in both, therefore it muſt needs reign in the one as well as in the other; a righteous man may "fall before the wicked," as it is, Prov. xxv. 26. He may fall into the dirt of groſſer iniquities, and furniſh them with matter of reproach. So did David, Peter, Abraham, and many more of the Lord's upright-hearted ones, whoſe ſouls nevertheleſs ſin did not reign over by a voluntary ſubjection to its commands, nor muſt this embolden any to ſin with more liberty.

2. *Secondly*, Though an upright ſoul fall once and again into ſin, though he reiterate the ſame act of ſin which he hath repented of before; yet it cannot merely from thence be concluded, that therefore ſin reigns over him as it doth over a wicked man that makes it his daily trade. I confeſs every re-

* Auguſt. † Dr. Reynolds.

deration of sin puts a further aggravation upon it: And it is sad we should repent and sin, and sin and repent; but yet you read, Prov. xxiv. 16. "A just man falleth seven times, and "riseth up again:" Job's friends were good men, yet he tells them, "These ten times have ye reproached me," Job xix. 3. This indeed shews a heart that greatly needs purging; for it is with relapses into spiritual as it is with relapses into natural diseases: A recidivation or return of the disease shews that the morbific matter was not duly purged; but though it shew the foulness, it doth not always prove the falseness of the heart.

3. *Thirdly*, Though the one may be impatient of the reproof of his sin, as well as the other; yet that alone will not conclude sin to be in full dominion over the one, as it is over the other.

It is pity any good man should storm at a just rebuke of sin; that such a precious oil as is proper to heal, should be conceited to break his head: but yet flesh will be tender and touchy, even in good men. Asa was a good man, and yet he was wroth with the prophet who reproved him, as you find, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. yet I doubt not but their consciences smite them for it, when pride suffers not another to do it; a reproof may be well-timed and ill managed by another, and so may provoke, but they will hear the voice of conscience in another manner.

4. *Fourthly*, Though in both some one particular sin may have more power than another, yet neither doth this alone conclude, that therefore that sin must reign in one, as it doth in another. Indeed the beloved lust of every wicked man is king over his soul; but yet a godly man's constitution, calling, &c. may incline him more to one sin than another; and yet neither that, nor any other may be said to be in dominion; for though David speaks of his iniquity, *i. e.* his special sin, Psalm xviii. 23. which some suppose to be the sin of lying, from that intimation, Psalm cxix. 29. yet you see in one place he begs God to keep him from it, and in the other he tells us he kept himself from it, and both shew he was not the servant of it.

5. *Fifthly*, Though both may sin against knowledge; yet it will not follow from thence, that therefore sins against knowledge must needs be sins in dominion in the one, as they are in the other: there was too much light abused, and violence offered in David's deliberated sin, as he confesses, Psal. li. 6. and the sad story itself too plainly shews; and yet, in the main, David was an upright man still, though this consideration of the fact shrewdly wounded his integrity, and stands upon record for a caution to all others.

SECT. VII.

WE have seen what doth not infer the dominion of sin in the former particulars, being simply considered; I shall next shew you what doth, and how the sincere and false hearts are distinguished in this trial. And,

1. *First*, Assent and consent upon deliberation notes the soul to be under the dominion of sin; when the mind approves sin, and the will gives its plenary consent to it, this sets up sin in its throne, and puts the soul into subjection to it; for the dominion of sin consists in its authority over us, and our voluntary subjection to it. This you find to be the character of a wicked graceless person, Psal. xxxvi. 4. "He deviseth "mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is "not good; he abhorreth not evil."

The best men may fall into sin through mistake, or be precipitated into sin through the violence of temptation; but to devise mischief, and set himself in an evil way, this notes full assent of the mind; and then, *not to abhor evil*, notes full consent of the will; and these two being given to sin, not only antecedently to the acting of it, but also consequently to it, to like it afterward, as well as before; this puts the soul fully under the power of sin: What can it give more?

This (as * one saith) in direct opposition to the apostle, Rom. xii. 1. is to present their bodies a dead sacrifice, unholy, and abominable to God; acceptable to the devil, which is their unreasonable service: all men by nature are given to sin, but these men give themselves to it.

2. *Secondly*, The customary practice of sin, subjects the soul to the dominion of sin; and so "he that is born of God "doth not commit sin," 1 John iii. 9. Fall into sin, yea, the same sin he may, and that often; but then its not without reluctance, repentance, and a protest entred by the soul in heaven against it; so that sin hath not a quiet possession of his soul; he is not the servant of sin, nor doth he willingly walk after its commandments; but so do its own servants; it is their daily practice, Jer. ix. 3. "They proceed from evil "to evil."

3. *Thirdly*, Delight in sin proves the dominion of sin. So the servants of sin are described, Isa. lxvi. 3. "They have cho-"sen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abomi-"nations."

* Mr. Caryl.

Look, as our delight in God is the meaſure of our holineſs, ſo our delight in ſin is the meaſure of our ſinfulneſs. Delight in ſin is the uppermoſt round of the ladder, and much higher the ſoul of a ſinner cannot go, till it be turned off into hell; "It is a ſport to a fool to do miſchief," Prov. x. 23. Never merrier than when he hath the devil for his play-fellow, ſaith * one upon that place.

4. *Fourthly*, Impatience of Chriſt's yoke and government, argues the ſoul to be the ſubject of ſin. This is clear from the apoſtle's reaſoning in Rom. vi. 17, 18. "But God be "thanked that ye were the ſervants of ſin, but ye have obey-"ed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered "you. Being then made free from ſin, ye became the ſer-"vants of righteouſneſs." Where you ſee plainly, that no man can have his manumiſſion or freedom from ſin, that comes not into Chriſt's ſervice, and yields himſelf up to his obedience.

So then, to fret at Chriſt's laws, that tie us up from our luſts, to be weary of all ſpiritual employments as a burden intolerable, never to be in our element and centre till we are off from God, and plunging in the world and our luſts; this is a ſad note of a ſoul in ſubjection to ſin.

Object. *But may not an upright ſoul find ſome wearineſs in ſpiritual things?*

Sol. Doubtleſs he may, for he hath fleſh as well as ſpirit; and though the ſpirit be willing, the fleſh is weak: he is ſanctified but in part, and his delight in the law of God is but according to, or *after the inner-man*, Rom vii. 22. But he ſees another law in his members, *i. e.* contrary inclinations. However, if he be weary ſometimes in the duties of godlineſs, to be ſure he is more weary out of them, and is not centred and at reſt till he be with his God again: but the carnal heart is where it would be, when it is in the ſervice of ſin; and as a fiſh upon dry land, when engaged in ſpiritual duties; eſpecially ſuch as are ſecret, and have no external allurements of reputation to engage him to them.

But what ſurpriſals or captivities to ſin ſoever may befal an upright ſoul, yet it appears by theſe eight following particulars, that he is not the ſervant of ſin, nor in full ſubjection to it. For,

1. *Firſt*, Though he may be drawn to ſin, yet he cannot reflect upon his ſin without ſhame and ſorrow; which plainly

* Mr. Trap.

shews it to be an involuntary surprize. So Peter wept bitterly, Matth. xxvi. 75. And David mourned for his sin heartily. Others can fetch new pleasures out of their old sins, by reflecting on them; and some can glory in their shame, Phil. iii. 19. some are stupid and senseless after sin; and the sorrow of a carnal heart for it, is but a morning dew: but it is far otherwise with God's people.

2. *Secondly*, Though a saint may be drawn to sin, yet it is not with a deliberate and full consent of his will; their delight is in the law of God, Rom. vii. 22. "They do that which they "would not," ver. 16. *i. e.* there are inward dislikes from the new nature: and as for that case of David, which seems to have so much of counsel and deliberation in it, yet it was but in a single act; it was not in the general course of his life; he was upright in all things, *i. e.* in the general course and tenour of his life, 1 Kings xv. 5.

3. *Thirdly*, Though an upright soul may fall into sin, yet he is restless and unquiet in that condition, like a bone out of joint; and that speaks him to be none of sin's servants; as, on the contrary, if a man be engaged in the external duties of religion, and be restless, and unquiet there, his heart is not in it, he is not at rest till he be again in his earthly business; this man cannot be reckoned Christ's servant: a gracious heart is much after that rate employed in the work of sin, that a carnal heart is employed in the work of religion. That is a good rule, *Ea tantum dicuntur ineſſe, quae inſunt per modum quietis:* That is a man's true temper, wherein he is at rest. Poor David fell into sin, but he had no rest in his bones because of it, Psalm li. 10, 11, 12. If his heart be off from God and duty for a little while, yet he recollects himself, and saith, as Psal. cxvi. 7. "Return to thy rest, O my soul."

4. *Fourthly*, Though a sincere Christian fall into sin, and commit evil; yet he proceeds not from evil to evil, as the ungodly do, Jer. ix. 3. but makes his fall into one sin a caution to prevent another sin. Peter by his fall got establishment for the time to come. If God will speak peace to them, they are careful to return no more to folly; Psalm lxxxv. 8. "In that "ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought? "Yea, what fear?" 2 Cor. vii. 11. It is not so with the servants of sin, one sin leaves them much more disposed to another sin.

5. *Fifthly*, A sincere Christian may be drawn to sin, but yet he would be glad with all his heart to be rid of sin: it would

be more to him than thouſands of gold and ſilver, that he might grieve and offend God no more; and that ſhews ſin is not in dominion over him: he that is under the dominion of ſin, is loath to leave his luſts. Sin's ſervants are not willing to part with it, they hold it faſt, and refuſe to let it go, as that text expreſſeth it, Jer. viii. 5. But the great complaint of the upright is expreſſed by the apoſtle according to the true ſenſe of their hearts, in Rom. vii. 24. "Who ſhall deliver me from the body "of this death?"

6. *Sixthly*, It appears they yield not themſelves willingly to obey ſin, in as much as it is the matter of their joy when God orders any providence to prevent ſin in them: "Bleſſed "be the Lord, (ſaid David to Abigail) and bleſſed be thy advice, "and bleſſed be thou, that haſt kept me this day from ſhed-"ding blood," 1 Sam. xv. 32, 33.

Here is bleſſing upon bleſſing for a ſin-preventing providence. The author is bleſſed, the inſtrument bleſſed, the means bleſſed. O it is a bleſſed thing in the eyes of a ſincere man to be kept from ſin! he reckons it a great deliverance, a very happy eſcape, if he be kept from ſin.

7. *Seventhly*, This ſhews that ſome who may be drawn to commit ſin, yet are none of the ſervants of ſin, that they do heartily beg the aſſiſtance of grace to keep them from ſin: "Keep back thy ſervant from preſumptuous ſins," (ſaith the Pſalmiſt, Pſalm xix. 13.) "let them not have dominion over "me;" *q. d.* Lord, I find propenſions to ſin in my nature, yea, and ſtrong ones too; if thou leave me to myſelf, I am carried into ſin as eaſily as a feather down the torrent. "O "Lord, keep back thy ſervant." And there is no petition that upright ones pour out their hearts to God in, either more frequently or more ardently than in this, to be kept back from ſin.

8. *Eighthly*, and *Laſtly*, This ſhews the ſoul not to be under the dominion of ſin, that it doth not only cry to God to be kept back from ſin, but uſes the means of prevention himſelf; he reſiſts it, as well as prays againſt it; Pſalm xviii. 23. "I "was alſo upright before him, and kept myſelf from mine ini-"quity:" So Job xxxi. 1. "I have made a covenant with "mine eyes;" and yet more fully in Iſa. xxxiii. 15. "He "ſhaketh his hands from holding bribes, and ſtoppeth his ears "from hearing blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil." See with what care the portals are ſhut at which ſin uſeth to enter. All theſe things are very relieving conſiderations to

poor ſouls queſtioning their integrity under the frequent ſurpriſals of ſin. And the next trial no leſs.

SECT. VIII.

(5.) *Fifthly*, Our oppoſition to, and conflicts with ſin diſcover what we are, gold, or droſs.

There are conflicts with ſin both in the regenerate, and in the unregenerate; but there is a vaſt difference betwixt them, as will appear in the following account.

1. *Firſt*, There is an univerſal, and there is a particular oppoſition to ſin: the former is found in regenerate, the latter in unregenerate ſouls: a gracious heart hates every falſe way, Pſal. cxix. 104. and muſt needs do ſo, becauſe he hates and oppoſes ſin as ſin; ſo that he can have no *peccatum in deliciis*, no excepted or reſerved luſt, but fights againſt the whole body, and every limb and member of the body of ſin.

But it is not ſo with the hypocrite or carnal profeſſor; he hath overcome ſome reſerved ſin, that he cannot part with.

2. *Secondly*, There is an oppoſition betwixt the new nature and ſin, and there is an oppoſition betwixt a natural conſcience and ſin; the former is the caſe of an upright ſoul, the latter may be a ſelf-deceiver.

A regenerate perſon oppoſeth ſin becauſe there is an irreconcileable antipathy betwixt it and the new nature in him, as is clear from Gal. v. 17. "The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpi-"rit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh; and theſe are contrary "the one to the other." By fleſh, underſtand corrupt nature; by ſpirit, not only the ſpirit of man, but the Spirit of God, or principal of regeneration in man. By the luſting of theſe two againſt each other, underſtand the deſire and endeavours of each others deſtruction and ruin; and the ground of all this is the contrariety of theſe two natures.

Theſe are contrary one to the other; there is a twofold oppoſition betwixt them, one formal, their very natures are oppoſite; the other effective, their workings and deſigns are oppoſite, as it is betwixt fire and water.

But the oppoſition found in unrenewed ſouls againſt ſin, is not from their natures, for ſin is ſuitable enough to that; but from the light that is in their minds and conſciences, which ſcares and terrifies them. Such was that in Darius, Dan. vi. 14. "He was ſore diſpleaſed with himſelf, and ſet his heart on "Daniel to deliver him; and laboured till the going down of "the ſun to deliver him." Here the conteſt was betwixt ſenſe

of honour upon one ſide, and conviction of conſcience upon the other ſide.

Sometimes a generous and noble diſpoſition oppoſes ſordid and baſe actions: *Major ſum, et ad majora natus; quam ut corporis mei ſim mancipium.* I am greater, and born to greater things, than that I ſhould be a ſlave to my body, ſaid a brave heathen.

3. *Thirdly*, There is a permanent, and there is a tranſient oppoſition to ſin; the former is the caſe of God's people, the latter of temporary and unſound profeſſors.

The ſaint when he draws the ſword in this warfare againſt ſin, throws away the ſcabbard; no end of this combat with ſin till life end; their life and their troubles are finiſhed together; 2 Tim. iv. 7. "I have fought the good fight, and have "finiſhed my courſe."

But in other men it is but a tranſient quarrel; out with ſin one day, and in another; and the reaſon is plain by what was noted before; it is not the oppoſition of two natures; it is like the oppoſition of the wind and tide, theſe may be contrary and make a ſtormy ſea to-day, but the wind may come about, and go as the tide goes to-morrow; but in a Chriſtian it is the oppoſition of the river and the dam, one muſt give way to the other, there is no reconciling them: but the other, "like the dog, returns to his vomit," 2 Pet. ii. *ult.*

4. *Fourthly*, There is an oppoſition to the root of ſin, and an oppoſition to the fruits of ſin. A gracious ſoul oppoſeth root and fruit, but others the latter only. The great deſign of an upright ſoul is not only to lop off, this or that branch, but to kill the root of ſin, which is in his nature; Rom. vii. 24. "Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?" But the great care and endeavours of others is to ſuppreſs outward acts of ſin, and eſcape the miſchievous conſequences of it: Yea, their ſtudy is, as Lactantius phraſeth it, *Potius abſcondere, quam abſcindere vitia:* To hide, rather than to kill their luſts.

5. *Fifthly*, There is an oppoſition to ſin, *in the ſtrength of God*, and an oppoſition to ſin, in our own ſtrength; the former is proper to real Chriſtians, the latter is found frequently with unſanctified perſons; when a Chriſtian goes forth againſt any ſin, it is in the ſtrength of God; ſo you read their rule directs them, Eph. vi. 10. "Be ſtrong in the Lord, and "in the power of his might: take unto you the whole armour "of God:" And ſuitably, you ſhall find them frequently upon their knees begging ſtrength from heaven againſt their luſts;

2 Cor. xii. 8. "For this cauſe I beſought the Lord thrice," ſaith Paul, *i. e.* often and earneſtly, that the temptation might depart from him.

But others go forth againſt ſin only in the ſtrength of their own reſolutions; ſo did Pendleton in our ſtory; theſe reſolutions, or vows, which they have put themſelves under, are as frequently fruſtrated as made.

6. *Sixthly*, There is a ſucceſsful oppoſition to ſin, and an oppoſition that comes to nothing: The former is that of true Chriſtians, the latter is found among unregenerate men.

The work of mortification in the ſaints is progreſſive, and increaſing: Hence Rom. vi. 6. "Our old man is crucified "with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed." Sin dies in believers much as crucified perſons uſe to die, *viz.* a ſlow, lingering, gradual, but ſure death; its vigour and life expires by degrees, or as a conſumptive perſon dies; for to that alſo he alludes here: There is a diſeaſe, which is called *conſumptio totius*, a conſumption of the whole; and thoſe that die of that diſeaſe, languiſh more and more, till at laſt, they drop *ſenſum ſine ſenſu*, by imperceptible degrees and ſteps into the grave.

But in the unregenerate, whatever conflicts they have with ſin, no corruption falls before it: It may be ſaid of them, as the church in another caſe complains of herſelf, Iſa. xxvi. 18. "We have been in pain, we have, as it were, brought forth "wind. We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, "neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen." So it fares with theſe profeſſors; they pray, they hear, they vow, they reſolve, but when all is done, their luſts are as ſtrong and vigorous as ever: No degree of mortification appears after all.

And thus much of the trial of our ſincerity by our carriage toward ſin.

CHAP. VII.

Shewing what proof or trial is made of the ſoundneſs or unſoundneſs of our graces by the duties of religion which we perform.

SECT. I.

WE now come (according to the method propoſed) to make trial of the truth or falſeneſs of grace, by the

duties we daily perform in religion. And certainly they alſo have the uſe and efficacy of fire, for this diſcovery, 1 John ii. 4, 5. "He that ſaith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments [is a liar] and the truth is not in him: But whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: And hereby know we that we are in him."

This is a practical lie, of which the apoſtle ſpeaks here; by which men deceive others for a while, and themſelves for ever; a lie not ſpoken, but done, when a man's courſe of life contradicts his profeſſion. The life of an hypocrite is but one longer or continued lie; he ſaith or profeſſeth he knows God, but takes no care at all to obey him in the duties he commands; he either neglects them, or if he performs them, it is not as God requires: "If they draw nigh to him with their lips, yet their heart is far from him," Iſa. xxix. 13. "Thou art near in their mouth, but far from their reins," Jer. xii. 2.

There are ſome, that feel the influence and power of their communion with the Lord in duties, going down to their very reins: And there are others, whoſe lips and tongues only are touched with religion.

This is an age of light and much profeſſion: Men cannot now keep up a reputation in the ſober and profeſſing world, whilſt they let down, and totally neglect the duties of religion; but ſurely, if men would be but juſt to themſelves, their very performances of duty would tell them what their hearts are.

SECT. II.

FOR there are, among others, theſe following particulars, that do very clearly difference the ſound from the unſound profeſſor.

1. *Firſt*, The deſigns and true levels and aims of mens hearts in duty will tell them what they are.

An hypocrite aims low; Hoſ. vii. 14. "They have not cried unto me with their heart when they howled upon their beds; they aſſemble themſelves for corn and wine, and they rebel againſt me." It is not Chriſt, and pardon, for mortification, and holineſs, but for corn, and wine; thus they make a market of religion; all their ends in duty are either carnal, natural, or legal; either to accommodate their carnal ends, or ſatisfy and quiet their conſciences; and ſo their duties are performed as a ſin-offering to God.

But an upright heart hath very high and pure aims in duty; "The deſire of their ſoul is to God," Iſa. xxvi. 8. "Their

" soul follows hard after God," Psal. lxiii. 8. " One thing have " I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may " dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to see " the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple," Psal. xxvii. 4. These are the true eagles that play at the sun, and will not stoop to low and earthly objects. Alas! if the enjoyment of God be missed in a duty, it is not the greatest enlargements of gifts will satisfy; he comes back like a man that hath taken a long journey to meet his friend upon important business, and lost his labour; his friend was not there.

2. *Secondly*, The engagements of mens hearts to God in duties will tell them what they are; the hypocrite takes little heed to his heart, Isa. xxix. 13. They are not afflicted really for the hardness, deadness, unbelief and wanderings of their hearts in duty, as upright ones are; nor do they engage their hearts, and labour to get them up with God in duty, as his people do. " I have intreated thy favour with my whole heart," saith David, Psal. cxix. 58. They are not pleased in duty until they feel their hearts stand towards God like a bow in its full bent. I say, it is not always so with them; what would they give that it might be so? But, surely, if their souls in duty be empty of God, they are filled with trouble and sorrow.

3. *Thirdly*, The conscience that men make of secret, as well as public duties, will tell them what their hearts and graces are; whether true or false. A vain professor is curious in the former, and either negligent, or, at best, formal in the latter; for he finds no inducements of honour, applause, or ostentation of gifts, externally moving him to them; nor hath he any experience of the sweetness and benefit of such duties internally to allure and engage his soul to them.

The hypocrite therefore is not for the closet, but the synagogue, Matth. vi. 5, 6. Not but that education, example, or the impulse of conscience, may sometimes drive him thither; but it is not his daily delight to be there; his meat and drink to retire from the clamour of the world to enjoy God in secret. It is the observation of their duties is the great inducement to these men to perform them; and, *verily*, saith our Lord, ver. 2. " they have their reward," ἀπέχουσι, they have it away, or they have carried off all the benefit and advantage that ever they shall have by religion. Much good may it do them with their applause and honour, let them make much of that airy reward, for it is all that ever they shall have.

But now for a soul truly gracious, he cannot long subsist

without secret prayer. It is true, there is not always an equal freedom and delight, a like enlargement and comfort in those retirements; but yet he cannot be without them; he finds the want of his secret, in his public duties: If he and his God have not met in secret, and had some communion in the morning, he sensibly finds it in the deadness and unprofitableness of his heart and life all the day after.

4. *Fourthly*, The spirituality of our duties tries the sincerity of our graces: An unregenerate heart is carnal, whilst engaged in duties that are spiritual. Some men deceive themselves in thinking they are spiritual men, because their employments and calling is about spiritual things, Hosea ix. 7. This indeed gives them the denomination, but not the frame of spiritual men; and others judge themselves spiritual persons, because they frequently perform and attend upon spiritual duties: But, alas, the heart and state may be carnal notwithstanding all this. O, my friends, it is not enough that the object of your duties is spiritual, that they respect an holy God; nor that the matter be spiritual, that you be conversant about holy things; but the frame of your heart must be spiritual; an heavenly temper of soul is necessary, and what are the most heavenly duties without it?

The end and design you aim at must be spiritual, the enjoyment of God, and a growing conformity to him in holiness; else multiply duties as the sand on the sea-shore, and they all will not amount to one evidence of your sincerity. "God is "my witness, whom I serve with my spirit," saith the apostle, Rom. i. 9. He seems to appeal to God in this matter. I serve God in my spirit, and God knows that I do so; I dare appeal to him that it is so; he knows that my heart is with him, or would be with him in my duties: The arms of my faith do either sensibly grasp, or are stretched out towards him in my duties. O how little savour do gracious hearts find in the most excellent duties, if God and their souls do not sensibly meet in them!

Certainly, reader, there is a time when God comes nigh to men in duty, when he deals familiarly with men, and sensibly fills their souls with unusual powers and delights. The near approaches of God to their souls are felt by them, (for souls have their senses as well as bodies) and now are their minds abstracted and marvellously refined from all that is material and earthly, and swallowed up in spiritual excellencies and glories.

These are the real prelibations, or foretastes of glory, which

no man can by words, make another to underſtand, as he himſelf doth that feels them.

Theſe ſeaſons, I confeſs, do but rarely occur to the beſt of Chriſtians, nor continue long when they do*: Alas! this wine is too ſtrong for ſuch weak bottles as we are. 'Hold, Lord, (an 'holy man ſaid once,) it is enough thy poor creature is a clay 'veſſel, and can hold no more:' This is that joy unſpeakable, and full of glory, which is mentioned, 1 Pet. i. 7, 8. Something that words cannot deſcribe. Theſe ſeaſons are the golden ſpots of our lives, when we are admitted to theſe near and ineffable views and taſtes of God: Poſſibly ſome poor Chriſtians can ſay but little to theſe things; their ſorrows are exerciſed in duties more than their joys; they are endeavouring to mount, but the ſtone hangs at the heel; they eſſay, but cannot riſe to that height that others do, who are got up by their labouring faith into the upper region, and there diſplay their wings, and ſing in the ſun-beams: But though they cannot reach this height, yet have they no ſatisfaction in duties wherein there is no intercourſe betwixt God and their ſouls.

That which contents another, will not content a Chriſtian. If the king be abſent, men will bow to the empty chair; but if God be abſent, an empty duty gives no ſatisfaction to a gracious ſpirit. The pooreſt Chriſtian is found panting after God by ſincere deſires, and labouring to get up that dead and vain heart to God in duty, (though, alas! it is many times but the rolling of the returning ſtone againſt the hill) yet he never expects advantage by that duty wherein the Spirit of God is not; nor doth he expect the Spirit of God ſhould be where his own ſpirit is not.

5. *Fifthly*, Aſſiduity and conſtancy in the duties of religion make a notable diſcovery of the ſoundneſs or rottenneſs of mens hearts. The hypocrite may ſhew ſome zeal and forwardneſs in duties for a time, but he will jade and give out at length; Job xxvii. 10. "Will he delight himſelf in the Al-"mighty? Will he always call upon God?" No, he will not. If his motions in religion were natural, they would be conſtant; but they are artificial, and he is moved by external inducements, and ſo muſt needs be off and on; he prays him-

* It is a ſweet hour, and it is but an hour, (a thing of ſhort continuance:) The reliſh of it is exceeding ſweet, but it is not often that Chriſtians taſte it. *Bernard.*

ſelf weary of praying, and hears himſelf weary of hearing: His heart is not delighted in his duties, and therefore his duties muſt needs grow ſtale and dry to him after a while. There be three ſeaſons in which the zeal of an hypocrite may be inflamed in duties.

Firſt, When ſome imminent danger threatens him; ſome ſmart rod of God is ſhaken over him; "When he ſlew them, "then they ſought him, and returned and enquired early af-"ter God," Pſalm lxxviii. 34. O the goodly words they give, the fair promiſes they make! and yet all the while "they do but flatter him with their lips, and lie unto him "with their tongues," ver. 36, 37. for let but that danger paſs over, and the heavens clear up again, and he will reſtrain prayer, and return to his old courſe again.

Secondly, When the times countenance and favour religion, and the wind is in his back, O what zeal will he have for God! So in the ſtony ground, Matth. xiii. 5. the ſeed ſprung up and flouriſhed until the ſun of perſecution aroſe, and then it faded away, for it had no depth of earth, no deep ſolid inward work or principle of grace to maintain it.

Thirdly, When ſelf-ends and deſigns are accommodated and promoted by theſe things. This was the caſe of Jehu, 2 Kings x. 16. "Come, ſee my Zeal;" for what? For a baſe ſelf-intereſt, not for God. How fervently will ſome men pray, preach, and profeſs, whilſt they ſenſibly feel the incomes and profits of theſe duties to their fleſh; whilſt they are admired and applauded!

Theſe external incentives will put an hypocrite into an hot fit of zeal; but then, as it is with a man, whoſe colours are raiſed by the heat of the fire, and not by the healthfulneſs of a good conſtitution, it ſoon fades and falls again.

But, bleſſed be God, it is not ſo with all: The man whoſe heart is upright with his God, will "keep judgment, and do "righteouſneſs at all times," Pſal. cvi. 3. Whether dangers threaten or no; whether the times favour religion or no; whether his earthly intereſt be promoted by it or no, he will be holy ſtill, he will not part with his duties when they are ſtript naked of thoſe external advantages; as the addition of theſe things to religion did not at firſt engage him, ſo the ſubſtraction of them cannot diſengage him.

If his duty become his reproach, yet Moſes will not forſake it, Heb. xi. 26. If he loſe his company, and be left alone, yet Paul will not flinch from his duty, 2 Tim. iv. 16. If hazard ſurround duty on every ſide, yet Daniel will not quit

it, Dan. vi. 10. for they considered these things at first, and counted the cost; they still find religion is rich enough to pay the cost of all that they can lose, or suffer for its sake; yea, and that with an hundred-fold reward now in this life. They never had any other design in engaging in religious duties, but to help them to heaven; and if they recover heaven at last, whether the way to it prove better or worse, they have their design and ends; and therefore they will be stedfast, "always "abounding in the work of the Lord, as knowing their labour "is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. *ult.*

6. *Sixthly*, The humility and self-denial of our hearts in duties, will try what they are for their integrity and sincerity towards God. Doth a man boast in his own excellencies in prayer, as the Pharisee did, Luke xviii. 10, 11. "God, I thank "thee, I am not as other men:" Which he speaks not in an humble acknowledgment of the grace of God which differences man from man, but in a proud ostentation of his own excellencies. Doth a man make his duties his saviours, and trust to them in a vain confidence of their worth and dignity? Luke xviii. 9. Surely, "his heart, which is thus lifted up within "him, is not upright," Hab. ii. 4. But if the heart be upright indeed, it will express its humility, as in all other things, so especially in its duties wherein it approaches the great and holy God.

First, It will manifest its humility in those awful and reverential apprehensions it hath of God, as Abraham did, Gen. xviii. 27. "And now, I that am but dust and ashes, (saith he) "have taken upon me to speak unto God." The humility of Abraham's spirit is, in some measure, to be found in all Abraham's children.

Secondly, In those low and vile thoughts they have of themselves and their religious performances: Thus that poor penitent, Luke vii. 38. stood behind Christ weeping: "Yet the dogs "eat the crumbs," saith another, Mark vii. 28. "I am more "brutish than any man," saith a third, Prov. xxx. 7. "I abhor "myself in dust and ashes," saith a fourth, Job xlii. 6. and as little esteem they have for their performances, Isa. lxiv. 6. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." I deny not but there is pride and vanity in the most upright ones; but what place soever it finds in their converses with men, it finds little room in their converses with God, or if it doth, they loath it, and themselves for it.

Thirdly, But especially their humility in duty is discovered in renouncing all their duties in point of dependence, and re-

lying entirely upon Chriſt for righteouſneſs and acceptance: They have ſpecial regard to duties in point of obedience, but none at all in point of reliance.

7. *Seventhly*, The communion and intercourſe which is betwixt God and men in duties, notably diſcovers what their perſons and graces are. And it muſt needs do ſo, becauſe what communion ſoever the hypocrite hath with duties, or with ſaints in duties, to be ſure he hath none with God.

None can come nigh to God in duty, but thoſe that are made nigh by reconciliation: All ſpecial communion with Chriſt is founded in real union with Chriſt; but "the wicked "are eſtranged from the womb," Pſalm lviii. 3.

But now there is real communion betwixt God and his people in duties. Truly our fellowſhip, κοινωνια, our communion is with the Father and Son, 1 John i. 3. God pours forth of his Spirit upon them, and they pour forth their hearts to God. It is ſenſibly manifeſted to them when the Lord comes nigh to their ſouls in duty, and as ſenſible they are of his retreats and withdrawments from their ſouls, Cant. iii. 1, 4. They find their hearts, like the heliotrope, open and ſhut according to the acceſſes and receſſes of the divine preſence. They that never felt any thing of this nature, may call it a fancy, but the Lord's people are abundantly ſatisfied of the reality thereof.

Their very countenance is altered by it, 1 Sam. i. 18. the ſad and cloudy countenance of Hannah cleared up, there was fair weather in her very face, as ſoon as ſhe knew ſhe had audience and acceptance with her God. I know all communion with God doth not conſiſt in joys and comforts; there is as real communion with God in the mortifying and humbling influences of his Spirit upon men, as in the cheering and refreſhing influences thereof. I know alſo there is a great diverſity in the degrees and meaſures thereof: It is not alike in all Chriſtians, nor with the ſame Chriſtian at all times. But that real Chriſtians have true and real communion with God in their duties, is a truth as manifeſt in ſpiritual ſenſe and experience of the ſaints, as their communion is one with another.

8. *Eightly*, Growth and improvement of grace in duties, notably differences the ſound and the unſound heart. All the duties in the world will never make an hypocrite more holy, humble, or heavenly than he is; but will, as the watering of a dry ſtick, ſooner rot it, than make it flouriſhing and fruitful. What was Judas the better for all thoſe heavenly ſer-

mons, prayers, and discourses of Christ which he heard? And what will thy soul be the better for all the duties thou performest weekly and daily, if thy heart be unsound? It is plain, from Job xv. 4 there must be an implantation into Christ, before there can be an improvement in fruitful obedience. And it is as plain, from 1 John ii. 14. that the virtues of ordinances must remain; the efficacy and powers that we sometimes feel under them, must abide and remain in the heart afterwards, or we cannot grow, and be made fruitful by them.

But the false professor is neither rooted in Christ by union with him, nor doth, or can retain the virtue of ordinances within him; but, like one that views his face in a glass, quickly forgets what manner of man he was; his head indeed may grow, his knowledge may increase, but he hath a dead and withered heart.

But as the saints have real communion with God in duties, so they do make improvements answerable thereunto: There is more certainly a ripening of their graces that way; a changing or gradual transformation from glory to glory; a springing up to that full stature of the man in Christ. "They that "are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the "courts of our God," Psal. xcii. 13, 14. There is pure and sincere milk in the breasts of ordinances; a believer sucks the very breasts of Christ in his duties, and doth grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. they do grow more and more judicious, experienced, humble, mortified, and heavenly, by conversing with the Lord so frequently in his appointments.

There is, I confess, a more discernable growth and ripening in some Christians, than in others: The faith of some groweth exceedingly, 2 Thess. i. 3. others more slowly, Heb. v. 12. but yet there are improvements of grace in all upright ones: habits are more deeply radicated, or fruits of obedience more increased.

Object. *If any upright soul be stumbled at this, as not being able to discern the increase of his graces, after all his duties.*

Sol. Let such consider the growth of grace is discerned as the growth of plants is, which we perceive rather *crevisse, quam crescere*; to have grown, than to grow: Compare time past and present, and you may see it; but usually our eager desires after more, make us overlook what we have as nothing.

9. *Ninthly*, The assistances and influences of the Spirit in duties, shews us what we are; no vital sanctifying influences can fall upon carnal hearts in duties: The Spirit helps not their

infirmities, nor makes interceſſion for them with groanings which cannot be uttered, as he doth for his own people, Rom. viii. 26, 27. They have his aſſiſtances in the way of common *gifts*, but not in the way of ſpecial grace: He may enable them to preach judiciouſly, not experimentally; to pray orderly and neatly, not feelingly, believingly, and broken-heartedly; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons "of God," Rom. viii. 14. He never ſo aſſiſts, but where he hath firſt ſanctified. Carnal men furniſh the materials of their duties out of the ſtrength of their parts; a ſtrong memory, a good invention are the fountains whence they draw.

But it is otherwiſe with ſouls truly gracious; they have ordinarily a threefold aſſiſtance from the Spirit in reference to their duties.

Firſt, Before duties, exciting them to it, making them feel their need of it, like the call of an empty ſtomach; Pſalm xxvii. 8. "Thou ſaidſt, Seek my face; my heart anſwered, "Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek."

Secondly, In their duties furniſhing both matter and affection, as in that text lately cited, Rom. viii. 26. guiding them not only what to aſk, but how to aſk.

Thirdly, After their duties, helping them not only to ſuppreſs the pride and vanity of their ſpirits, but alſo to wait on God for the accompliſhment of their deſires.

Now, though all theſe things, wherein the ſincerity of our hearts is tried in duties, be found in great variety (as to degrees) among ſaints, yet they are myſteries unknown by experience to other men.

CHAP. VIII.

Opening the trials of ſincerity and hypocriſy, by ſufferings upon the account of religion.

SECT. I.

WE are now arrived at the laſt trial of grace propounded, *viz.* by ſufferings for religion.

Thouſands of hypocrites embark themſelves in the profeſſion of religion in a calm; but if the wind riſeth, and the ſea rageth, and they ſee religion will not tranſport them ſafely to the cape of their earthly hopes and expectations, they deſire to be landed

again as soon as may be; for they never intended to ride out a storm for Christ: So you find, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. "He endureth for a while; but when tribulation or persecution "ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."

But yet it is not every trial by sufferings that separates gold from dross; and therefore my business will be to shew,

1. *First*, When the fire of sufferings and persecution is hot and vehement enough to separate them.

2. *Secondly*, Why it must needs discover hypocrisy when it is at that height.

3. *Thirdly*, What advantages sincere grace hath to endure that severe and sharp trial.

SECT. II.

1. NOW the fire of persecution, or sufferings for religion, may be judged intense, and high enough to separate gold and dross;

First, When religion exposes us to imminent hazard of our deepest and dearest interests in this world: Such are our liberties, estates and lives: Then it is a fierce and fiery trial indeed. Sometimes it exposes the liberties of its professors, Rev. ii. 10. "The devil shall cast some of you into prison." Sometimes their estates, Heb. x. 34. "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of "your goods;" and sometimes their lives, Heb. xi. 37. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain "with the sword." Whilst it goes no higher than some small inconveniencies of life, reputation and sense of honour will hold a false heart; but when it comes to this, few will be found able to endure it, but those that expect to save no more by religion but their souls, and account themselves in good case, if they can but save them with the loss of all that is dear to them in this world.

Here the false heart boggles; here it usually jades and faulters.

Secondly, The fiery trial is then high, when there remains no visible hopes of deliverance, or outward encouragements to sense, that the scene will alter. When "we see not our signs, "there is no more any prophet, nor any that can tell us how "long," as the case with the church was, Psal. lxxiv. 9. Then their hands hang down, and their hearts faint: Nor is it to be wondred at, when the length of troubles prove so sore a temptation even to the upright, to put forth their hands to iniquity; as it is Psal. cxxv. 3. If such a temptation shake such men

as build on the rock, it must quite overturn those whose foundation is but sand.

Thirdly, When a false professor is engaged alone in sufferings, and is singled out from the herd, as a deer, to be run down, now it is a thousand to one but he quits religion to save himself: Good company will encourage a faint-hearted traveller to jog on a great way; but if he be forsaken by all, as Paul was, no man to stand by him; if left alone, as Elijah was, what can encourage him to hold out?

Indeed, if they had the same invisible supports those good men had, that the Lord was with them, that would keep them steady; but wanting that encouragement from within, and all shrinking away from without, they quickly tire downright.

Fourthly, When near relations and intimates oppose and tempt us. The prophet speaks of a time "when a man's ene-"mies shall be the men of his own house;" it may be the wife of his bosom, Micah vii. 5, 6. O what a trial is that which Christ mentions in Luke xiv. 26. when we must hate father and mother, wife and children, or quit claim to Christ and heaven! This is hard work indeed.

How hard did that truly noble and renowned Galeacius Carracciolus find this! O what a conflict found he in his bowels! Now Christ and our dearest interest come to meet like two men upon a narrow bridge; if one go forward, the other must go back, and now the predominate interest can no longer be concealed.

Fifthly, When powerful temptations are mixed with cruel sufferings; when we are strongly tempted, as well as cruelly persecuted: This blows up the fire to a vehement height. This was the trial of those precious primitive believers, Heb. xi. 35, 37. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were "tempted." Here was life, liberty, and preferment set upon one hand, and death, in the most formidable shape, upon the other. This cannot but be a great trial to any, but especially when a cruel death, and tender temper meet, then the trial goes high indeed.

SECT. III.

2. AND that such sufferings as these will discover the falseness and rottenness of mens hearts, cannot be doubted: If you consider that this is the fire designed by God, for this very use and purpose, to separate the gold from the dross; so you will find it, 1 Pet. iv. 12. "Beloved, think it not "strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you," *i. e.*

the very design and aim of providence in permitting and ordering them, is to try you. The design of Satan is to destroy you; but God's design is to try you. Upon this account you find the hour of persecution (in a suitable notion) called "the "hour of temptation or probation," Rev. iii. 10. for then professors are sifted to the very bran; searched to the very bottom principles. "This is the day that burns as an oven, in "which all the proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be as "stubble," Mal. iv. 1. For,

1. *First*, In that day the predominant interest must appear, and be discovered: It can be concealed no longer; "No man "can serve two masters," saith Christ, Luke xvi. 13. A man may serve many masters, if they all command the same things, or things subordinate to each other; but he cannot serve two masters, if their commands clash and interfere with each other: And such are the commands of Christ and the flesh in a suffering hour. Christ saith, "Be thou faithful to the death;" the flesh saith, *Spare thyself*, and secure the comforts of life. Christ saith, "He that loveth father or mother, wife or chil-"dren, lands or inheritance more than me, is not worthy of "me." Flesh saith, *He that will grieve and break the heart of such dear relations, and forsake, when he might keep such earthly accommodations, is not worthy of them.*

Thus the two interests come in full opposition: and now have but patience to wait a little, and you shall discern which is predominant. A dog follows two men, while they both walk one way, and you know not which of the two is his master; stay but a little till their path parts, and then you shall quickly see who is his master: So is it in this case.

2. *Secondly*, In that day sensible supports fail, and all a man's relief comes in by the pure and immediate actings of faith; and were it not for those reliefs, his heart would soon faint and die away under discouragements, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. "We faint "not whilst we look not at the things which are seen, for they "are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, for they are "eternal," *q. d.* If we keep not our eye intently fixed upon the invisible and eternal things in the coming world; we shall feel ourselves fainting and dying away under the many troubles and afflictions of this world. "I had fainted (saith holy David) "if I had not believed." How then suppose ye shall the hypocrite live at such a time, who hath no faith to support him? No relief but what comes in through the senses?

3. *Thirdly*, In that day all mere notions and speculations about

religion vanish; and nothing relieves and satisfies the suffering soul but what it really believes, and what it hath satisfying proof and experience of in himself. There are a great many pretty and pleasing notions which our minds are entertained with; some delight in times of peace, which can do us no service at all in the day of trouble! and for our speculative, unpracticable knowledge of the greatest truths in religion, as little service is to be expected from them; Except we have better evidence and security about them, we shall be loth to venture all upon the credit of them.

That is a very considerable passage to this purpose in Heb. x. 34. "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, (knowing "in yourselves) that ye have in heaven a better and more en- "during substance." This *knowing in yourselves* is by inward and sensible experience, taste and feeling, which is abundantly satisfying to the soul; and stands opposed to all that traditional knowledge we receive from others; which, as it leaves the mind fluctuating, so the heart also dead and comfortless.

4. *Fourthly*, In that day the root and foundation of a man's faith and hope is tried, and then they that have built upon the sand must needs fail; for every thing is as its foundation; principles are to us what a root is to a tree, or a foundation to a house; a flaw or grand defect there most assuredly ruins all. This we find to be the very scope of those two famous parables, Luke xiv. 25. and Matth xiii. 21. Lesser troubles shake but the branches, but these try the very root: if nothing be found there but self-ends; the force of education, and the influence of examples, surely when the winds rise high, and beat upon it, they will quickly lay the loftiest professor even with the ground.

And thus you see what a crisis an hour of temptation, the suffering hour is, and what discoveries of hypocrisy it must needs make; for now the hypocrite, like Orpha, will forsake religion; but sincerity will make the soul cleave to it, as Ruth did to Naomi.

SECT. IV.

3. WHAT advantages sincerity gives the soul for its establishment and perseverance in suffering times, I shall briefly account for in the following particulars.

1. *First*, Sincere godliness dethrones that idol, the love of this world, in all true Christians; and this is it that makes men shrink and flinch from Christ in a day of suffering. I do not deny but even believers themselves love the world too

much; but they love it not as their chief good: it is not their portion or happiness; if any man so love the world, "the love "of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. How much soever a sincere Christian loves the world, yet still it is in subordination to the love of God, John xxi. 15. Sincerity can consist with no other love of the world; it will not suffer such a cursed plant to grow under its shadow.

Now, what is it, but this inordinate, supreme love of the creature, that makes men forsake Christ in time of temptation? This was the ruin of that young man, Matth. xix. 22. "He "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." This was the overthrow of Demas, 2 Tim. iv. 10. "He hath forsaken me (saith the apostle) having loved this present world." The love of this world, like sap in green wood, will not suffer you to burn for Christ; get but the heart mortified to the creature by a discovery of better things in heaven, and it will establish and fix your spirits, that it shall not be in the power of creatures to shake you off from Christ your foundation.

2. *Secondly*, Sincerity knits the soul to Christ, and union with him secures us in the greatest trials; *Munimur quatenus unimur*. The hypocrite having no union with Christ, can have no communion with him, nor communications of grace from him; and so that little stock of his own being quickly spent (I mean natural courage and resolution) and no incomes from Christ, he must needs give up in a short time. But it is with a believer in a day of trouble, as it is with a garrison besieged by land, but free and open to the sea, whence fresh supplies are daily sent in to relieve it: See 2 Cor. i 5. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abound-"eth by Christ;" fresh aids and daily supplies proportionable to our expences and decays of strength: So Col. i. 11. "Strengthned with all might in the inner-man, according to "his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with "joyfulness." And this is the believers great advantage by his union with Christ in a day of trial.

3. *Thirdly*, As sincerity unites the soul with Christ, so it sets the heart upon heaven, and things eternal; Col. iii. 1. *&c.* Surely nothing is more conducive to our stability than this, in the hour of temptation.

This is the most effectual preservative from temptations upon the right hand, and upon the left. Moses could cast a kingdom at his heels; despise the riches, pleasures, and honours of Egypt, whilst his eye was fixed upon him that is invisible, and had respect to the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 24, 25.

26. And it was a brave reply of the forty martyrs to Valense the emperor, tempting them with the preferments and honours of the world, 'Why offer ye these trifles to us, when you know 'how the whole world is contemned by us?" And for temptations on the left hand, how little can they move that soul, who realizes the glory of the approaching world, and sees the afflictions and sufferings of this world preparing him for, and hastening him to the enjoyment of it: temptations meet with but cold entertainment from such souls.

4. *Fourthly*, Sincerity drives but one design, and that is to please and enjoy God: and what can more establish and fix the soul in the hour of temptation than this? The reason why the hypocrite is unstable in all his ways, is given us by the apostle James, i. 8. He is a double-minded man, δίψυχος ἀνήρ, a man of two souls in one body; as a profane wretch once boasted, that he had one soul for God, and another for any thing. But all the designs of a gracious heart are united in one; and so the entire stream of his affections runs strong.

It is base by-ends and self-interests, that, like a great many ditches cut out of the bank of a river, draw away the stream out of its proper channel, and make its waters fail. But if the heart be united for God, as the expression is, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. then, we may say of such a Christian, as was said of a young Roman, *Quicquid vult, valde vult*; What he doth, is done with all his might. And this was the ground of that saying, *Liberet me Deus ab homine unius tantum negotii*: A man of one only design, puts to all his strength to carry it; nothing can stand before him.

5. *Fifthly*, Sincerity brings a man's will into subjection to the will of God; and this being done, the greatest danger and difficulty is over with such a man. This is that holy oil which makes the wheels of the soul run nimbly, even in difficult paths of obedience; *Non tardat uncta rota*. Let but a man be once brought to that, "The will of the Lord be done," as it is Acts xxi. 13. to see the highest reason of chearful obedience in the holy, just, and good will of God, and then all the difficulty is over; he can suffer quietly what men inflict unjustly.

6. *Sixthly*, Sincerity takes its measures of present things by the rules of faith and eternity; it goes not by the same reckoning and account that others do, who judge of things by sense, and the respects they have to the present world, 2 Cor. iv. 18. "We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things "that are not seen;" and this is there given as the reason of his not fainting under present difficulties: So, Rom. viii. 18.

"I reckon that the sufferings of the present times are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." He will not allow himself to undervalue eternal glory, by once mentioning present sufferings, in a way of bemoaning himself for them: A steady eye upon the other world makes us more than conquerors over the troubles of this world.

7. *Seventhly*, To conclude; sincerity alone hath all the heavenly aids and assistances to stability, and perseverance in suffering times: upright ones (and such only) have Christ's intercession in heaven for them, Rom. viii. 34. The Spirit's consolation in all their troubles, 1 Pet. iv. 14. The Spirit of glory and of God resteth on them: the beneficial ministry of angels, who are sent forth upon their account, Heb. i. 14. *A stock of prayers*, going for them all the world over, Eph. vi. 18. Multitudes of precious promises in the Scriptures; for every line, word, and syllable of which the faithfulness of God stands engaged: so that it is impossible such gold can perish in the fire.

And thus of the several ways by which grace is here tried.

CHAP. IX.

Opening the designs and ends of God, in bringing of the professors of religion into such various trials of their graces in this world.

SECT. I.

THESE are some of the ways and methods in which God brings his gold to the touchstone, and to the fire, even in this world, before the awful and solemn trial they must come to in the final judgment: and if we desire to be satisfied what the design and end of God in making such probations of his people is,

We must conclude, in the general, he certainly designs his own glory, and his peoples advantage and profit in them. If he suffer them to be tried by reproaches, *happy are they, the Spirit of God and glory resteth on them;* there is their profit; and though his name be evil spoken of, yet in the meekness of their spirits *he is glorified*, as it is, 1 Pet. iv. 14. "If the scourge slay suddenly, he laugheth at the trial of the innocent," Job ix. 23. Not at their afflictions, but at the effects and blessed issues and results of them: Not that it gives them pain, but that it gives them glory. Upon this account the apostle bids

us count it all joy when we fall into diverse temptations or trials: and still the more trials the more joy; for thereby God will produce such effects as are more precious than gold that perisheth, 1 Pet. i. 7. O who can value the comfort that is tasted by the soul, upon the trial and discovery of its sincerity, when after some sore temptation wherein God hath helped us to maintain our integrity, or after some close pinching affliction, wherein we have discovered in ourselves a sweet resignation to, and contentment in the will of God, an heart cleaving to the Lord, purged and made more spiritual under the rod! we can turn to the Lord, and appeal to him, as the prophet did, Jer. xii. 3. "But thou, O Lord, knowest me; thou hast seen me, "and tried mine heart towards thee."

I say, who can duly value such an advantage: who would exchange such a comfort for all the gold and silver in the world? How many trials soever God brings his people under, to be sure neither his own glory, nor their interest, shall suffer any damage by them.

SECT. V.

BUT more particularly, let us bring our thoughts close to the matter before us, and we shall find many great advantages and benefits rising out of these trials of sincerity: For,

1. *First*, Hereby hypocrisy is unmasked and discovered; the vizard is plucked off from the false professor, and his true natural face and complexion shewn to the world; and in this there is a great deal of good.

Object. *God, you will say, Where lies it? All the world sees the mischief and sad effects of it; many are stumbled, many are hardened by it:* "Woe to the world because of offences!" Matth. xvi. 7.

Sol. True, some are prejudiced and hardened by it, so as never to have good thoughts of the ways and people of God more: That is sad indeed; however, therein God accomplishes his word, and executeth his decree; and though these perish, yet,

First, Others are warned, awakened, and set a searching their own hearts more narrowly than ever, and this is good, 1 Cor. x. 11, 12. Now these were our examples; "wherefore "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Secondly, Hereby sin is ashamed; and it is good when sin that hath exposed men to so much shame, shall be itself exposed to shame: This is the just reward of sin, Jer. xiii. 25, 26.

"This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the "Lord; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in false-"hood, therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that "thy shame may appear."

The turning up the skirt is a modest expression of exposing a person to the greatest shame in the day of trial: God, by discovering hypocrisy, shames the hypocrite; and, surely, many such discoveries are made of men at this day: We may see sin, that lurked close in the heart before, now laid open before all Israel, and before the sun.

Thirdly, Hereby the poor self-cozening hypocrite hath the greatest opportunity and advantage that ever was before him in all his life, to recover himself out of the snare of the devil. Now all his pretences are gone; now that which like a shield was advanced against the arrows of reproof and conviction is gone; now a poor creature stands naked, and stripped out of all his pleas, as a fair and open mark to the world, and his own conscience; and happy will it be for him, if now the Lord make conviction to enter point blank into his soul. All these are blessed effects of the discovery of hypocrisy.

Secondly, By these trials integrity is cleared up, and the doubts and fears of many upright and holy ones allayed and quieted, resolved and satisfied.

O what would many a poor Christian give for satisfaction in that great point of sincerity! How many tears have been shed to God in secret upon that account? How many hours have been spent in examination of his own heart about it, and still jealousies and fears hang upon his heart? He doubts what he may prove at last. Well, saith God, let his sincerity then come to the test, kindle the fire, and cast in my gold. Trials are the high way to assurance; let my child see that he loves me more than these, that his heart is upright with me. I will try him by prosperity and by adversity, by persecutions and temptations, and he shall see his heart is better than he suspects it to be. This shall be the day of resolution to his fears and doubts.

The apostle, speaking of heresies, 1 Cor. xi. 7, 9. puts a necessity upon them: *There must be heresies*, saith he, *that they which are approved may be made manifest*. The same necessity there is (and for the same end) of all other trials of grace, that the lovely, beautiful, sweet face of sincerity may be opened sometimes to the world, to enamour them, and to the soul in whom it is, to satisfy it that it doth not personate a Christian, but

lives the very life of a Christian, and hath the very spirit and principles of a Christian in him.

3. *Thirdly*, By these trials, pride and self-confidence is destroyed and mortified in the saints, as much as by any thing in the world. We never see what poor weak creatures we are, until we come to the trial. It is said, Deut. viii. 2. "God "led Israel through the desart, to prove them, and to humble "them." When we are proved, then we are humbled. Those that over-reckon their graces before the trial, see they must come to another account, and take new measures of themselves after they have been upon trial.

Ah! little did I think, saith one, that I had so much love for the world, and so little for God, until afflictions tried it. I could not have believed that ever the creature had got so deep into my heart, until providence either threatened or made a separation, and then I found it. I thought I had been rich in faith, until such a danger befel me, or such a want began to pinch hard; and then I saw how unable I was to trust God for protection, or provision. O it is a good thing that our hearts be kept humble and lowly, how rich soever they be in grace!

4. *Fourthly*, By trials grace is kept in exercise, and the gracious soul preserved from security and spiritual slothfulness. Trials are to grace what the estuations and continual agitations of the waters are to the sea, or what the racking of wines from the lees is to it: Were it not for our frequent trials and exercises, we should quickly settle upon the lees, and our duties would be (as God complains of Ephraim) like soure or dead drink, Hosea iv. 18. flat and spiritless. "Moab hath been at ease "from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not "been emptied from vessel to vessel; neither hath he gone "into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his "scent is not changed," Jer. xlviii. 11.

Much after that rate it would be with our hearts, did not the Lord frequently try and exercise them. Let the best man be without some trial or other but a few months, and you may find the want of it in his prayers and conferences quickly. O what a tang of formality will be found in them! And is it for the honour of God, or profit of his people, that it should be so? No, no, the Lord knows it is not; but how shall their spirits be reduced to their former zealous heavenly temper again? Why, saith the Lord, they must into the furnace again: "I will melt them and try them; for how shall I do for

" the daughter of my people," Jer. ix. 7. I love them too well to lose them for want of a rod. Alas! if I should suffer things to go on at this rate, what will become of them in a little time? What delight can I take in their duties, when the faith, fervour, humility, and holy seriousness of their spirits is wanting in them? I will therefore " refine them as silver is " refined, and try them as gold is tried, and they shall call " upon my name, and I will hear them, and I will say, It is my " people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God," Zech. xiii. 9. and thus the Lord chides himself friend again with his people.

Thus he recovers them to their true temper, and thus his visitations do preserve their spirits; and when the Lord sees these sweet effects of his trials upon them, it greatly pleaseth him. O now, saith God, I like it; this providence hath done them good; this rod was well bestowed; the letting loose of this temptation, or that corruption upon them, hath made them find their knees again; now I hear the voice of my child again.

Beloved, this is a blessed fruit and effect of our frequent trials; and how ungrateful soever they are to flesh and blood, that affects ease, and is loth to be disturbed, yet it is necessary to the preservation of our spirits.

5. *Fifthly*, By the trial of our graces Satan is defeated, and his accusation of the saints found to be mere slanders. It is a very common thing with the devil and wicked men, to accuse the people of God of hypocrisy, and to tell the world they are not the men and women they are taken to be; and that if their inside were but turned out by some thorough trial, or deep search, it would appear that religion did not indeed live in their souls, as they pretend, but that they only act a part, and personate heavenly and mortified persons upon the public stage of profession.

Thus the accuser of the brethren suggests the hypocrisy of Job, chap. ii. 5. " Put forth thine hand now, and touch his " bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face;" *q. d.* Well might Job serve thee whilst thou hast been so bountiful a master to him; he hath been well rewarded for all the service he hath done thee; but if thou stop the current of his prosperity, thou shalt see how quickly he will stop the course of his duty: A few lashes from thy hand will make him curse thee to thy face. But O what shame and disappointment was

it to that envious ſpirit? What a vindication of Job's integrity, when under the greateſt trials of his faith and patience, he ſtill held faſt his integrity, and ſhews himſelf as great a pattern of patience under the croſs, as he had been of piety in the days of his greateſt proſperity! Satan gets nothing by bringing forth the ſaints upon the ſtage, to be made a ſpectacle to angels and men, as it is, 1 Cor. iv. 9.

6. *Sixthly*, and *laſtly*, The frequent trials of grace exhibit a full and living teſtimony againſt the atheiſm of the world. Theſe prove beyond all words or arguments that religion is no fancy, but the greateſt reality in the world: Men would make religion but a fancy, and the zeal of its profeſſors, but the intemperate heat of ſome crazy brains, over-heated with a fond potion.

They that never felt the real influences of religion upon their own ſouls, will not believe that others do feel them. Serious piety is become the ludicrous ſubject with which the wanton wits of this atheiſtical world ſport themſelves. But behold the wiſdom and goodneſs of God exhibiting to the world the undeniable teſtimonies of the truth of religion, as often as the ſincere profeſſors thereof are brought to the teſt by afflictions from the hand of God, or perſecution from the hands of men: Lo! *here is the faith and patience of the ſaints*; here is their courage, meekneſs, and ſelf-denial, ſhining as gold in the fire; they have the real proofs of it before their eyes; inſtead of caſting them into hell, and convincing them by eternal fire, he is pleaſed to caſt his own people into the fire of affliction, that they who ſcoff at them may be convinced at an eaſier and cheaper rate. It is no new thing to ſee the enemies of religion brought over to embrace it, by the conſtancy and faithfulneſs of the ſaints in their trials and ſufferings for it. God grant that the atheiſm of this preſent generation do not occaſion a more fiery trial to the people of God in it, than they have yet ſuffered!

CHAP. X.

Shewing that that grace only is to be reckoned sincere and real, which can endure those trials which God appoints, or permits, for the discovery of it.

SECT. I.

BEFORE I offer you the proofs and evidences of this truth, it will be necessary to prevent some mistakes that may be occasioned by misunderstanding of it.

Caution 1. And, in the first place, we are not to think assurance of our sincerity impossible to be had in this life, because as long as we live here, we are in a state of trial; and how many trials soever have been made upon us already, yet still there are more to come; and we know not what we shall prove in future trials, though God hath kept us upright in former trials: No, no, this is none of my meaning; nor doth such a conclusion necessarily follow this assertion: For a Christian that hath rightly closed with Christ at first, and been faithful in the duties of active and passive obedience hitherto, may be assured, upon good grounds, of a victory before he come to the fire of his remaining trials. So was the apostle, Rom. viii. 35, *&c.* "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or "nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these we are more "than conquerors, thro' him that hath loved us." Here is an assured triumph before the combat. So Job xxiii. 10. "But he "knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall "come forth as gold." He appeals to God for the sincerity of his heart so far as he had hitherto gone in the way of religion, and thence concludes, that whatever trials God should bring him to for time to come, he should come forth as gold, *i. e.* he should not lose one grain of the fire. And this confidence of a gracious soul is built not only upon experience gained in former trials, but upon faith in the power, promises, and faithfulness of God, which are engaged for him in the covenant of grace, to keep him in the greatest dangers that befal him in this world.

He believes the power of God is able to make him stand, though he hath no power nor might in himself to overcome the least temptation, 1 Pet. i. 5. "You are kept, φρουρουμενοι (kept "as a garrison) by the power of God through faith unto sal-

" vation." When Chriſt hath once taken poſſeſſion of the ſoul by his ſpirit, he fortifies it by his power, as a garriſon: that uſing the means, it be ſurprized or betrayed no more into the enemy's hand, ſo as finally to be loſt.

He builds this confidence alſo upon the promiſes of God, which are his ſecurity in future dangers: And how are all the pages of the Bible beſpangled with ſuch promiſes, as the firmament is with bright and glorious ſtars? Such are theſe of the firſt magnitude, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. " Chriſt ſhall confirm you to " the end, that ye may be blameleſs in the day of our Lord " Jeſus Chriſt. God is faithful, by whom ye are called unto " the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." And no leſs ſatisfying and ſweet is that, Jer. xxxii. 40. " And I will " make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn " away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in " their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me." And of the ſame nature is that alſo, John x. 27, 28. " My ſheep hear " my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give " unto them eternal life; and they ſhall never periſh, neither " ſhall any man pluck them out of my hand."

If there be any hypocrite in ſheeps-cloathing, he hath no part or lot in this promiſe; but it ſecures the whole flock of Chriſt, great and ſmall, againſt all danger.

He alſo builds his aſſurance upon the faithfulneſs of God, which ſtands engaged to make good every line, word, and ſyllable of his promiſes to his people; ſo we find, in 1 Cor. x. 13. " There hath no temptation taken you but ſuch as is com- " mon to man; but God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to " be tempted above that ye are able; but will with every temp- " tation make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear " it." And, 2 Theſ. iii. 3. " But the Lord is faithful, who " ſhall eſtabliſh you, and keep you from evil."

Add to this, the conſtant prevalent interceſſion of Chriſt in heaven for his people, in all their trials, and then you will ſee a ſincere Chriſtian need not to deny himſelf the joy and comfort of his aſſurance, upon the account and ſuppoſition of his future trials.

SECT. II.

Caution 2. NOR do we here ſuppoſe, in this aſſertion, that inherent grace in the ſaints hath a ſufficiency of ability in itſelf to endure the greateſt and ſevereſt trials that can befal it in this world. It is certain that it ſhall

be carried ſafely through all, but not in its own ſtrength and ability.

That is a true obſervation of the learned Gerſon, *Perfectiones ſibi relictæ, ſunt pondera ad ruinam*: The moſt perfect creature left to itſelf, will fall into ruin. This was exemplified in the angels that fell; and in Adam, though in a perfect ſtate. Divine preſervation is the prop which ſupports the beſt creatures from ruin. Grace itſelf is but a creature, and therefore a dependent being: It is but a ſtream, depending upon the ſupply of the fountain: If the fountain let not forth itſelf, what becomes of the ſtream? That is a true and judicious obſervation of the learned Dr. Ames, *Perſeverantia fidelium, vel immutabilis eorum conditio ſecundum integram ejus rationem, non pervenit a principio intrinſeco ſolo, nec a ſolo extrinſeco; ſed partim ab intrinſeco, ex natura vitæ ſpiritualis a Chriſto fluentis, et partim ab extrinſeco, ex cuſtodia, protectione et directione Dei; Ameſii Coronis*, Art. 5. The perſeverance of believers, or the immutability of their condition, if we view the whole ground and reaſon of it, is not wholly from within, or wholly from without itſelf; but partly from the nature of the ſpiritual life which flows from Chriſt into them, and partly from the keeping, protection, and direction of God: That protection is always afforded to this life of grace; and this life of grace always needs that protection. The beſt of men are but men at beſt, as one ſpeaks: It was not Peter's grace and reſolution that kept him, but Chriſt's care of him and interceſſion for him, Luke xxii. 32. "Be ſtrong in the Lord, (ſaith the apoſtle) and in the power "of his might," Epheſ. vi. 10. "Without me (ſaith Chriſt) "ye can do nothing," John xv. 5.

Neither of theſe is that which I have before me to prove; but this is that which I aim at, that ſuch ſeeming grace as was never yet brought to the trial, nor will be able to bear the trial, when God ſhall bring it thereto, muſt not paſs for current (as too frequently it doth) among us: Such grace will neither comfort us now, nor ſave us hereafter: For,

SECT. III.

1. FIRST, great numbers of perſons in the profeſſing world are deceived and deſtroyed by truſting to ſeeming and untried grace: this was the miſerable condition of thoſe Laodicean profeſſors in the text; they reckoned themſelves rich, but were really poor: All is not gold that gliſters; their gold (as they accounted it) was never tried in the fire. If a man's whole eſtate lay in ſome precious ſtone, ſuppoſe a rich

diamond, how is he concerned to have it thoroughly tried, to see whether it will bear a smart stroke with a hammer, or fly like a Bristol diamond under it? All that you are worth lies in the truth and sincerity of your grace; and till that be tried you know not whether you be worth any thing or nothing.

Reader, There are two sad sights in the world, which cannot but deeply affect every upright heart: one is to see so many thousands of rational and ingenious men in the Romish church, by an implicit faith in their guides, venturing their souls upon their bare word; never searching the scriptures with their own eyes, but wholly trusting to the infallibility of a pope or a council; when, in the mean time, they would fear to take their word for a sum of money, without some further security. It is amazing to behold the soul-destroying, easy credulity of those men; but this is a stroke of madness and spiritual infatuation, judicially inflicted upon them, that the judgment which is written might be fulfilled in them, "God shall send them "strong delusions, that they should believe a lie," 2 Thes. ii. 11.

And yet more amazing is that stroke of God upon multitudes of vain and formal professors even in the reformed Protestant churches, where no man is restrained from searching the scriptures; nay, where men are so frequently and earnestly pressed, from sabbath to sabbath, to examine themselves, and prove their own work, that yet so many are content to leave all at hazard, and without any more ado, or farther search in the matter, credit the report of their own deceitful hearts, and take all for granted, without due trial or examination of the matter. Surely, no one thing sends down more souls daily to hell out of the professing world, than this doth. The five foolish virgins (*i. e.* the unprincipled professors in the reformed churches) perished this way; they took it for granted all was well, because they had lamps of profession as well as others; and saw not the cheat till the cry was heard at midnight, and their unfurnished lamps went out, Matth. xxv.

2. *Secondly*, The promises of salvation are made over to tried grace, and such only as will endure the trial: So James i. 12. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is "tried he shall receive the crown of life which God hath pro-"mised to them that love him." We must be first tried, and then crowned. "If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not "crowned, except he strive lawfully," 2 Tim. ii. 5. He manifestly alludes to the Roman games, to which there were judg-

es appointed to see that no foul play were offered contrary to the law for wrestling; and where it was found, the crown was denied them. Not to him that sets forth in the morning with resolution and gallantry, but to him that holds out till the evening of his life, is the promise made; Matth. x. 22. "He that "endureth to the end shall be saved." So Rom. ii. 7. "To "them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glo- "ry, and honour, and immortality, eternal life." And once more, Heb. iii. 14. "We are made partakers of Christ, if we "hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." So that if you should endure some few slighter troubles, and faint at last, give out when a closer trial befals you, all your labours and sufferings are in vain. Sincerity and final perseverance are the conditions of all special promises.

3. *Thirdly*, Every man's graces and duties must be tried and weighed by God in the great day; and if they cannot endure these lesser trials to which God exposes them now, how will they endure that severe and exact trial to which he will bring them then? No man can search his own heart with that exactness in this world, as God will search it in the world to come.

I may say in this case to you as the Lord spake to Jeremiah, chap. xii. 5. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have "wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and "if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they have "wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jor- "dan?" This was spoken to encourage the prophet to constancy in his work; and as if the Lord had said, O Jeremy, do the strivings of the men of Anathoth, thine own town, dishearten thee? Pluck up thy spirits, and faint not; there are harder trials than these that thou must undergo at Jerusalem; these are no more, to what is coming, than the running with footmen is to contending with horses, or the passing a small rivulet to the swellings of Jordan.

To allude to this; if our graces and duties cannot bear these lighter trials; if a little lift of prosperity, or lighter stroke of adversity discover so much falseness, rottenness, pride and selfishness in the heart; if we cannot resist the motions of corruptions, but yield ourselves to obey sin in the lusts of it; if we can neither keep our hearts with God in duties, nor mourn for our wanderings from him; if a few scoffs from wicked tongues, or trials of persecution from the hands of men will cause us to faint in the way, and turn back from following the Lord, what shall we do when "He comes, whose fan is in his hand, and

"who will thoroughly purge his floor;" Matth. iii. 12. who will try every man's work as by fire, 1 Cor. iii. 13. search the secrets of all hearts, Rom. ii. 16. *weigh every man to his ounces and drachms?* surely we can take little comfort in that which is so unable to bear the severe trials of that day, that it cannot stand before the slighter trials of this day.

4. *Fourthly*, True grace is willing to be tried, and nothing is more desirable to an upright soul, than to know his own condition: if therefore we shun the trial, and are loth to search ourselves, or be searched by the Lord, our condition is suspicious, and we can take little comfort in it. It was David's earnest desire, Psalm cxxxix. 23. that God would thoroughly search his heart and reins, and see if there were any way of wickedness in him. False grace is shy of God's eye, it cares not to be examined; but this is the delight of sincere ones: "Every one that doth evil hateth the light, lest his deeds should "be reproved; but he that doth truth, cometh to the light, "that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought "in God," John iii. 20, 21.

The reason is plain why hypocrisy cannot endure to come to the touchstone and test; for hypocrites, having a secret consciousness of their own guilt and unsoundness, know that, by this means, their vain confidence would quickly be confuted, and all their reputation for religion blasted. But, oh! if men dare not stand before the word, as it is now opened and applied by ministers, how will they stand when it shall be opened and applied, in another manner, by Jesus Christ?

O professor, if thy condition be good, thy heart right, thou wilt desire to know the very worst of thyself; and when thou hast made the deepest search thou canst, thou wilt still fear thou hast not been severe enough, and impartial enough to thyself; nothing will give thee more content than when thou feelest the word dividing thy soul and spirit, thy joints and marrow; nothing so much comforts thee under, or after an affliction, as the discovery it hath made of my heart; thou wilt seem to feel with what affection those words came from the prophet's lips, Jer. xii. 2. "But thou, O Lord, knowest me, thou hast seen "me, and tried my heart towards thee." O what a refreshing sweetness will stream through thy heart, and all the powers of thy soul, when thou canst make the like appeal to God with like sincerity! And certainly, without such a disposition of spirit towards the trial of our graces, we can have little evidence of the truth of them.

CHAP. XI.

Containing divers practical inſtructive inferences from this doctrine; with a ſerious exhortation to ſelf-trial and thorough examination.

SECT. I.

Infer. 1. ARE there ſuch variety of trials appointed to examine the ſincerity of mens graces; how great a vanity then is hypocriſy, and to how little purpoſe do men endeavour to conceal and hide it? We ſay, Murder will out; and we may as confidently affirm, Hypocriſy will out. When Rebecca had laid the plot to diſguiſe her ſon Jacob, and by perſonating his brother, to get the bleſſing, Jacob thus objects againſt it, "My father, peradventure, will feel me, "and I ſhall ſeem to him as a deceiver; and I ſhall bring a "curſe upon me, and not a bleſſing," Gen. xxvii. 12. as if he ſhould ſay, but what if my father detect the cheat, how then ſhall I look him in the face? How ſhall I eſcape a curſe? After the ſame manner every upright ſoul ſcares itſelf from the way of hypocriſy. If I diſſemble, and pretend to be what I am not, my Father will find me out. Ah! there is no darkneſs nor ſhadow of death that can conceal the hypocrite, but out it will come at laſt, let him uſe all the art he can to hide it. Oftentimes God diſcovers him by the trials he appoints in this world; and men in that day ſhall "return and diſcern betwixt "the righteous and the wicked, between him that ſerveth "God, and him that ſerveth him not," Mal. iii. 18. But if he make an hard ſhift to get by a private way to hell, carrying this comfort with him to the laſt ſtep, That no body knows or thinks he is gone thither; yet there will be a day when God will ſtrip him naked before the great aſſembly of angels and men, and all ſhall point at him, and ſay, *Lo! this is the man that made not God his hope.*

This is he that wore a garment of profeſſion to deceive, but God hath now ſtript him out of it, and all men ſee what he is: For, "There is nothing covered, that ſhall not be reveal-"ed, and hid, that ſhall not be known," Matth. x. 26. And the apoſtle aſſures us, 1 Tim. v. 24, 25. "That they that are "otherwiſe, cannot be hid." If mens works be not good, it is impoſſible they ſhould be hid long: A gilded piece of braſs

may paſs from hand to hand a little while, but the touchſtone will diſcover the baſe metal: If that do not, the fire will.

O ſinners! away with your hypocriſy, be honeſt, ſincere, plain and hearty in religion: If not, confuſion of face ſhall be your recompence from the Lord; that is what you ſhall get by it.

Infer. 2. *Secondly*, Are there ſuch trials appointed and permitted by the Lord for the diſcovery of his people's ſincerity in this world? *Then let none of God's people expect a quiet ſtation in this world:* Certainly you ſhall meet with no reſt here, you muſt out of one fire into another; and it is a merciful condeſcenſion of the Lord to poor creatures, thus to concern himſelf for their ſafety and benefit: "What is man, that thou ſhouldſt "magnify him? and that thou ſhouldſt ſet thine heart upon him? that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning, and "try him every moment?" Job vii. 17, 18.

O it is a great deal of honour put upon a poor worm, when God will every moment try him and viſit him; it argues the great eſteem the gold-ſmith hath of his gold, when he will ſit by the furnace himſelf, and order the fire with his own hand; when he pries ſo often, and ſo curiouſly into the fining-pot, to ſee that none of his precious metal, upon which he ſets his heart, be loſt.

Think it not then a debaſing to you to be ſo often expoſed to trials. If God did not value you highly, he would not try you ſo frequently; What would become of you, if your condition here ſhould be more ſettled and quiet than now it is? I believe you find droſs enough in your hearts after all the fires into which God hath caſt you: Surely there is filth enough in the beſt of God's people to take all this, it may be a great deal more trouble than they have yet met with. We fancy it a brave life to live at eaſe; and if we meet with longer reſpites and intervals of trial than uſual, we are apt to ſay, We ſhall never be moved, as David did, Pſal. xxx. 6. or we ſhall die in our neſt, as it is Job xxix. 18. Our hard and difficult days are over; but woe to us if God ſhould give us the deſire of our hearts in this. See what the temper of thoſe mens ſpirits is, that meet with no changes, Pſal. lv. 19. "Becauſe they have "no changes, therefore they fear not God." O it is better to be preſerved ſweet in brine, than to rot in honey!

Infer. 3. Thirdly, *Let none boaſt in a carnal confidence of their own ſtrength and ſtability.* You are yet in a ſtate of trial: Hitherto God hath kept you upright in all your trials; bleſs God, but boaſt not; you are but feathers in the wind of

temptation, if God leave you to yourselves. Peter told Christ, (and doubtless he spoke no more than he honestly meant) "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I:" And you know what he did when the hour of his trial came, Matth. xxvi. 35. Angels left to themselves have fallen: It is better to be an humble worm, than a proud angel.

Ah! how many Pendletons will this professing age shew, if once God bring us to the fiery trial? "Let him that thinks he "stands, take heed lest he fall." You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. None stand upon firmer ground than those that see nothing in themselves to stand upon; he that leans upon his own arm, usually benumbs it, and makes it useless.

Infer. 4. *Fourthly*, Doth God kindle so many fires in Sion, and set his furnaces in Jerusalem, to discover and separate the dross from the gold? How contrary are those men to God, that allow, yea, and prize the dross of hypocrisy, which God hates, and stick not to make the holy God a patronisser, and countenancer of it in the hearts and lives of men?

It is amazing to read what popish pens have impudently written about this matter: * Sylvester puts the question, Whether it be a sin to make a false shew of sanctity? And answers it thus: If it be for the honour of God, and profit of others, it is no sin. Nay, they have a reverence for hypocrisy, as an holy art. Vincentius spends a whole chapter in commendation of the hypocrisy of St. Dominic, and entitles it, *De sancta ejus hypocrisi*; i. e. Of the holy hypocrisy of that saint; reckoning it among his commendations, that he had the art of dissembling. And yet, one peg higher, a religious person (saith † another) that feigns himself to have more holiness than he hath, that others may be edified, sins not, but rather merits.

Blush, O heavens! that ever such factors for hell should open and vend such ware as this in the public market, and invite the world to hypocrisy, as that which makes for the glory of God, the edification of men, and a work meritorious in the hypocrite himself: This is the doctrine of devils indeed!

Infer. 5. *Fifthly*, If it be so, that all grace must come to the test, and be tried as gold in the fire, even in this world; how are all men concerned to lay a solid foundation at first, and thoroughly deliberate the terms upon which they close with Christ, and engage in the profession of his name? "Which of "you, (saith Christ) intending to build a tower, sitteth not down

* *Astum adv simulatio, n.* 4. † *Rossella in v. hypocrisis, n.* 1.

"firſt, and counteth the coſt?" Luke xiv. 28. If ſome men had ſet down at firſt, and pondered the conditions and terms of Chriſt, they had not ſat down now diſcouraged, and tired in the way. The apoſtle Paul went to work at another rate; he accounted all but dung and droſs for Chriſt, Phil. iii. 8. and was of the ſame mind when the actual trial came; for then he tells us, "He counted not his life dear unto him," Acts xx. 24. And the apoſtle Peter admoniſhes believers "not to think "it ſtrange concerning the fiery trial which was to try them," 1 Pet. iv. 12. *q. d.* Let none of theſe things be ſurpriſals to you; you are told before-hand what you muſt truſt to; every Chriſtian muſt be a martyr, at leaſt in the diſpoſition and reſolution of his heart.

O that men would balance the advantages and diſadvantages of religion, and thoroughly ponder the matter in their deepeſt thoughts! To the teſt you muſt come; the rain will fall, and the ſtorm beat upon your buildings; look carefully therefore to the foundations.

Infer. 6. *Sixthly*, and *laſtly*, Learn from this point the unavoidableneſs of ſcandals and offences in the way of religion; for if there be a neceſſity of trial, there is alſo a neceſſity of ſcandal. "It muſt needs be that offences come," Luke xvii. 1. Why, muſt it needs be? The reaſon is evident; all muſt come to the trial, and all are not able to bear it. Our Lord tells us, Matth. xxiv. 8, 9, 10. of a day of great ſtraits and perplexity coming: "And then (ſaith he) ſhall many be of-"fended." The day of trial is the day of ſcandal: By theſe offences ſome are put a ſearching themſelves, and ſome fall a cenſuring all others; but the holy God brings about his end both ways, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh.

SECT. II.

WELL then, if it be ſo that all muſt into the furnace, let every man try his own work; examine yourſelves, profeſſors, ſearch your hearts, commune with your reins, nothing more concerns you in all the world than this doth. O that you would be more in your cloſets, and oftner upon your knees! O that you would look into the Bible, then into your hearts, and then to God, ſaying, with David, "Search me, "O God, and know my heart; prove me, and try my reins, "and ſee if there be any way of iniquity in me!" Never did religion thrive in the world ſince mens heads have been ſo overheated with notions and controverſies, and their hearts ſo

ſenſibly cooled in their cloſet-work. I have elſewhere ‡ more largely preſſed this duty upon the profeſſors of this generation, and thither ſhall refer the reader for the preſent, to ſee the neceſſity and importance of this work.

Here I ſhall only urge the duty of ſelf-trial by ſome preſſing motives, and awakening conſiderations.

Motive 1. And the firſt ſhall be, the exceeding difficulty of this work; difficulty in ſome caſes may be a diſcouragement; but where the matter is of abſolute neceſſity, as it is here, nothing provokes more to diligence; "Strive (ſaith our Lord) to "enter in at the ſtrait gate, for many will ſeek to enter in, "and ſhall not be able," Luke xiii. 24. A double difficulty is found attending this work of ſelf-trial: Difficulty in bringing the heart to it; and difficulty in the right and ſucceſsful management of it. Who finds it not hard to perſuade his heart to ſuch work as this? Nature declines it, fleſh and blood reliſh it not: It is one of the great ſeverities in religion: It is no eaſy thing to bring a man and his own heart together.

It is in this caſe, as in the ſtudy of geography; we are more inquiſitive to know, and delighted when we diſcover, the rarities of foreign countries, and ſtrange things in the remote parts of the world, than thoſe of our own native country. I fear there be many profeſſors of religion that can ſpend day after day in hearing, and love to be diſputing fruitleſs controverſies, that never ſpent one day in ſearching what influence all thoſe ſermons they have heard have had upon their hearts, or in rightly ſtating and determining that great controverſy, in whoſe right and poſſeſſion their ſouls are, and which way they ſhall go as ſoon as death hath divided them from thoſe mortal bodies; yea, I doubt, many ſinful hours are ſpent in prying into, reporting and cenſuring the failings of others, and not one hour faithfully employed in judging their own hearts before the Lord: Oh! men had rather be about any other work than this; there is no pleaſure in it to the fleſh.

And yet how difficult ſoever it be to bring our hearts to the work, it is certainly much more difficult to manage it ſucceſsfully, and bring the great queſtion of our ſincerity to a clear reſult and iſſue. O how many upright hearts have ſat cloſe to this work many a year, and lifted up many a cry to heaven, and ſhed many ſecret undiſſembled tears about it; and yet ſtill are in the dark, and their minds greatly perplexed, and filled with fear about it! What would they not do? What would

‡ See before, my Saint Indeed, *&c.*

they not ſuffer? What pleaſant enjoyment would they not gladly part with, to arrive at the deſire of their ſouls, the full aſſurance of their ſincerity? It was the ſaying of a pious woman, I have born ſaid ſhe, ſeven children, and they have coſt me as dear as ever children coſt a mother, yet I would be content to endure all that ſorrow over again, to be aſſured of the love of God to my ſoul.

Motive 2. *Secondly*, And as the work is full of difficulty, ſo the diſcovery of your ſincerity will be full of ſweetneſs and joy unſpeakable: It will never repent you, that you have prayed and mourned, that you have trembled and feared, that you have ſearched and tried: Nay, it will never repent you, that God hath tried you by thouſands of ſharp afflictions and deep ſufferings, if, after all, your ſincerity may be fully cleared up to the ſatisfaction of your ſouls; for in the ſame day your ſincerity ſhall be cleared, your title to Chriſt will be made as clear to your ſouls as your ſincerity is; you may then go to the promiſes boldly, and take your own Chriſt into the arms of your faith, and ſay, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his!" Yea, you may be confident, it ſhall be well with you in the judgment of the great day, for "God will not caſt away the "upright man," Job viii. 20. If the word clear you now, it cannot condemn you then.

O what an eaſe is it to the ſoul, when the fears and doubts that hang about it are gone! When a man ſees what he is, and what he hath in Chriſt and the promiſes, and what he hath to do; even to ſpend the time betwixt this and heaven, in admiring the grace of God that hath delivered him from the ruining miſtakes and miſcarriages by which ſo great a part of the profeſſing world to all eternity.

Motive 3. *Thirdly*, The deep concernment of your ſouls in the matter to be tried, ſhould awaken you to the utmoſt diligence about it. The trials of men for their life, at human bars, is but a trifle to this: It is your eternal happineſs that ſtands or falls with your ſincerity.

It is ſaid in the trial of opinions, that if a man ſuperſtruct hay or ſtubble upon the foundation, he ſhall ſuffer loſs; yet he himſelf may be ſaved, 1 Cor. iii. 12. But if hypocriſy be in the foundation, there is no ſuch relief, there is no poſſibility of ſalvation in that caſe.

Ah, reader, thou muſt be caſt for ever according to the integrity or hypocriſy of thy heart with God. Summon in then all the powers of thy ſoul: bring thy thoughts as cloſe as it is poſſible to bring them to this matter: If there be any ſubject of con-

sideration able to drink up the spirits of a man, here it is: Never was time put to an higher improvement; never were thoughts spent upon a more important business, than this is: Happy is the man that rescues the years, months, days, yea, the very moments of his life from other employments to consecrate them unto this solemn, awful, and most important business!

Motive 4. *Fourthly*, How evidential will it be of your sincerity, when you are willing to come to the trial of your own hearts?

Suppose your doubts and fears should in some degree remain with you; yet in this you may take some comfort, that if hypocrisy be in your heart, it is not there by consent: You are not loth to rise and come to trial, because, like Rachel, you sit upon your idols: Certainly it is a good sign thy heart is right, when it is filled with so much fear lest it should be false. You know all the disciples said, "Master, is it I?" before Judas, who was the traitor, spake a word. "Last of all (saith the "text) Judas said, Is it I?" Our willingness to be tried, is a good sign that the desire of our soul is to be right with God.

Motive 5. *Fifthly*, Conclude it to be your great advantage to be thoroughly tried, whatever you be found to be in the trial: If you be found sincere, you are richly rewarded for all your pains and labour: Never did that man repent of digging and toiling, that after all hit upon the rich vein that he digged for: What is a vein of gold to a vein of sincerity!

If upon search you find the contrary, a false, hypocritical, unsound heart, yet in that very sad discovery you meet with the greatest advantage that ever you had in your lives for salvation. This discovery is your great advantge: For now your vain confidence being over-turned, and your ungrounded hopes destroyed; you lie open to the stroke of a deep and effectual conviction of your sin and misery, which is the introductive mercy to all other mercies to your souls; and surely till you come to that, to give up your false hopes, and quit your vain pretensions, there is no hope of you. Christ told the Pharisees, Matth. xxi. 31. Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before you: Publicans were the worst sort of men, and harlots the worst sort of women, and yet they stood in a fairer way for heaven than the hypocritical Pharisees, because conviction had easier access to their consciences: They had not those defences and pleas of duty and strictness to ward off the word, that the self-cozening Pharisees had.

I may say of your vain and groundless hopes, as Christ, in

another ſenſe, ſaid to the officers that came to ſeize him in the garden, *If you ſeek me, let theſe go their way.* So it is here, if you expect Chriſt, and ſalvation by him, let your vain confidences go their way; away with your maſques and vizards, if ever you expect to ſee Chriſt. O it is your happineſs to have all theſe things ſtript off, and your nakedneſs and poverty diſcovered, that you may be rich, as the text ſpeaks.

Motive 6. *Sixthly*, Conſider how near the day of death and judgment approach you. O theſe are ſearching days wherein you cannot be hid: Will your conſciences, think you, be put off in a dying day as eaſily as they are now? No, no, you know they will not.

I have heard of a good man that conſumed not only the greateſt part of the day, but a very conſiderable part of the night alſo in prayer, to the great weakening of his body; and being asked by a relation why he did ſo, and prayed to favour himſelf, he returned this anſwer, *O I muſt die, I muſt die*; plainly intimating, that ſo great is the concernment of dying in a clear aſſured condition, that it is richly worth the expence of all our time and ſtrength to ſecure it.

You know alſo that *after death the judgment*, Heb. ix. 27. you are haſtening to the judgment of the great and terrible God. Death will put you into his balance to be weighed exactly; and what gives the ſoul a louder call to ſearch itſelf with all diligence, whilſt it ſtands at the door of eternity, and its turn is not yet come to go before that awful tribunal: O that theſe conſiderations might have place upon our hearts!

CHAP. XII.

Containing divers helps for the clearing of ſincerity, and diſcovery of hypocriſy.

SECT. I.

YOU ſee of what importance the duty of ſelf-examination is, and how many things put a neceſſity and a ſolemnity upon that work. Now, in the cloſe of all, I would offer you ſome helps for the due management thereof, that is as far as I can carry it; the Lord perſuade your hearts to the diligent and faithful application and uſe of them. The general rules to clear ſincerity are theſe that follow:

Rule 1. *We may not preſently conclude we are in the ſtate of*

hypocriſy, becauſe we find ſome workings of it, and tendencies to it in our ſpirits: The beſt gold hath ſome droſs and alloy in it. Hypocriſy is a weed naturally ſpringing in all ground, the beſt heart is not perfectly clear or free of it: It may be we are ſtumbled, when we feel ſome workings or grudgings of this diſeaſe in ourſelves, and looking into ſuch ſcriptures as theſe, John i. 47. "Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no "guile:" and Pſal. xxxii. 1. "Bleſſed is the man unto whom "the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whoſe ſpirit there is "no guile."

This I ſay may ſtumble ſome upright ſoul, not underſtanding in what an allayed and qualified ſenſe thoſe ſcriptures are to be underſtood: For by a *ſpirit without guile*, is not underſtood a perſon abſolutely free from all deceitfulneſs, and falſeneſs of heart; this was the ſole prerogative of the Lord Jeſus, who was ſeparated from ſinners, in whoſe mouth was no guile found: In whom the prince of this world, in all his trials and attempts upon him, found nothing: But we muſt underſtand it of reigning and allowed hypocriſy; there is no ſuch guile in any of the ſaints: diſtinguiſh the preſence from the predominance of hypocriſy, and the doubt is reſolved.

Rule 2. *Every true ground of humiliation for ſin, is not a ſufficient ground for doubting and queſtioning our eſtate and condition.*

There be many more things to humble us upon the account of our infirmity, than there are to ſtumble us upon the account of our integrity: It is the ſin and affliction of ſome good ſouls to call their condition in queſtion, upon every ſlip and failing in the courſe of their obedience. This is the way to debar ourſelves from all the peace and comfort of the Chriſtian life: We find that Joſeph was once minded to put away Mary his eſpouſed wife, not knowing that the holy thing which was conceived in her was by the holy Ghoſt. It is the ſin of hypocrites to take braſs for gold, and the folly of ſaints to call their gold braſs: Be as ſevere to yourſelves as you will, always provided you be juſt: "There is that maketh himſelf rich, and "yet hath nothing; and there is that maketh himſelf poor, "and yet hath great riches," Prov. xiii. 7. Hiram called the cities Solomon gave him, Cabul, Dirty, for they pleaſed him not, 1 Kings ix. 13. It is but an ill requital, an ungrateful return to God for the beſt of mercies, to undervalue them in our hearts, and be ready upon all occaſions to put them away as worth nothing.

Rule 3. *A stronger propension in our nature, and more frequent incidence in our practice to one sin than another, doth not presently infer our hypocrisy, and the unsoundness of our hearts in religion.* It is true, every hypocrite hath some way of wickedness: Some *peccatum in deliciis*, iniquity that he delights in, and rolls as a sweet morsel under his tongue; some lust that he is not willing to part with, nor can endure that the knife of mortification should touch it; and this undoubtedly argues the insincerity and rottenness of his heart: And it is true, also, that the nature and constitution of the most sanctified man inclines him rather to one sin, than to another, though he allow himself in none; yea, though he set himself more watchfully against that sin than another, yet he may still have more trouble and vexation, more temptation and defilement from it, than any other.

As every man hath his proper gift, one after this manner, and another after that, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. vii. 7. so every man hath his proper sin also, one after this manner, and another after that? For it is with original sin, as it is with the juice or sap of the earth, which though it be the common matter of all kinds of fruits, yet it is specificated according to the different sorts of plants and seeds which it nourishes; in one it becomes an apple, in another a cherry, &c. Just so it is in original corruption, which is turned into this or that temptation, or sin, according to this or that constitution, or employment it finds us in; in one it is passion, in another lust, in a third covetousness, in a fourth levity, and so on. Now I say the frequent assaults of this sin, provided we indulge it not, but by setting double guards, labour to keep ourselves from our own iniquity, as David did, Psalm xviii. 23. will not infer the hypocrisy of our hearts.

Rule 4. *A greater backwardness and indisposedness to one duty rather than another, doth not conclude the heart to be unsound, and false with God, provided we do not inwardly dislike, and disapprove any duty of religion, or except against it in our agreement with Christ, but that it riseth merely from the present weakness and distemper we labour under.*

There are some duties in religion, as suffering for Christ, bearing sharp reproofs for sin, &c. that even an upright heart under a present distemper, may find a great deal of backwardness and lothness to; yet still he consents to the law, that it is good, is troubled that he cannot comply more chearfully with his duty, and desires to stand complete in all the will of God: Perfection is his aim, and imperfections are his sorrows.

Some Christians have much ado to bring their hearts to fixed, solemn meditation; their hearts fly off from it, but this is their burden, that it should be so with them. True, it is a very dangerous sign of hypocrisy, when a man's zeal runs out in one channel of obedience only, and he hath not respect to all God's commandments; as physicians observes, the sweating of one part of the body, when all the rest is cold, is symptomatical, and argues an ill habit: But whilst the soul heartily approves all the will of God, and sincerely desires to come up to it, and mourns for its backwardness, and deadness, to this or that duty, and this is not fixed, but occasional, under some present indisposition, out of which the soul riseth by the same degrees as sanctification riseth in him, and the Lord comes in with renewed strength upon him; this, I say, may consist, and is very ordinarily found to be the case of upright-hearted ones.

Rule 5. *The glances of the eye at self-ends in duties, whilst self is not the weight that moves the wheels, the principal end and design we drive at, and whilst these glances are corrected, and mourned for, do not conclude the heart to be unsound, and hypocritical in religion:* For even among the most deeply sanctified, few can keep their eye so steady and fixed, with pure, and unmixed respects, to the glory of God, but that there will be (alas! too frequently) some bye-ends, insinuating and creeping into the heart.

These, like the fowls, seize upon the sacrifice, let the soul take what pains it can to drive them away: It is well that our High-priest bears the iniquities of our holy things for us. Peter had too much regard to the pleasing of men, and did not walk with that uprightness towards the Gentile Christians, and the believing Jews, in the matter of liberty, as became him, Gal. ii. 13, 14. for which, as Paul saith, he ought to be blamed, and he did blame him: But yet such a failing as that in the end of his duty, did not condemn him. In public performances there may be too much vanity, in works of charity too much ostentation; these are all workings of hypocrisy in us, and matters of humiliation to us; but whilst they are disallowed, corrected, and mourned over, are consistent with integrity.

Rule 6. *The doubts and fears that hang upon, and perplex our spirits about the hypocrisy of our hearts, do not conclude that therefore we are what we fear ourselves to be.* God will not condemn every one for a hypocrite that suspects, yea, or charges himself with hypocrisy. Holy David thought his heart was not right with God, after that great slip of his in the matter of Uriah; and therefore begs of God to renew a right spirit in

him, Pſal. li. 10, 11, 12. his integrity was indeed wounded, and he thought deſtroyed by that fall.

Holy Mr. Bradford ſo vehemently doubted the ſincerity of his heart, that he ſubſcribed ſome of his letters, as Mr. Fox tells us, *John Bradford the hypocrite; a very painted ſepulchre:* And yet in ſo ſaying, he utterly misjudged the ſtate and temper of his own ſoul.

SECT. II.

WELL then, let not the upright be unjuſt to themſelves, in cenſuring their own hearts; they are bad enough, but let us not make them worſe than they are, but thankfully own, and acknowledge the leaſt degrees of grace and integrity in them; and poſſibly our uprightneſs might be ſooner diſcovered to us, if, in a due compoſure of ſpirit, we would ſit down, and attend the true anſwers of our own hearts to ſuch queſtions as theſe are.

Queſt. 1. Do I make the approbation of God, or the applauſe of men, the very end and main deſign of my religious performances, according to 1 Theſſ. ii. 4. Col. iii. 23. will the acceptation of my duties with men ſatisfy me, whether God accept my duties and perſon, or not?

Queſt. 2. Is it the reproach and ſhame that attends ſin at preſent, and the danger and miſery that will follow it hereafter, that reſtrains me from the commiſſion of it? Or is it the fear of God in my ſoul, and the hatred I bear to ſin as it is ſin? according to Pſal. xix. 12. and Pſal. cxix. 113.

Queſt. 3. Can I truly and heartily rejoice to ſee God's work carried on in the world, and his glory promoted by other hands, though I have no ſhare in the credit and honour of it, as Paul did? Phil. i. 18.

Queſt. 4. Is there no duty in religion ſo full of difficulty and ſelf-denial, but I deſire to comply with it? And is all the holy and good will of God acceptable to my ſoul, though I cannot riſe up with like readineſs to the performance of all duties; according to that pattern? Pſal. cxix. 6.

Queſt. 5. Am I ſincerely reſolved to follow Chriſt and holineſs at all ſeaſons, however the aſpects of the times may be upon religion? Or do I carry myſelf ſo warily and covertly as to ſhun all hazards for religion; having a ſecret reſerve in my heart to launch out no farther than I may return with ſafety; contrary to the practice and reſolution of upright ſouls? Pſalm cxvi. 3. Pſal. xliv. 18, 19. Rev. xxii. 11.

Queſt. 6. Do I make no conſcience of committing ſecret ſins, or neglecting ſecret duties? Or am I conſcientious both in the one and other, according to the rules and patterns of integrity? Matth. vi. 5, 6. Pſal. xix. 12.

A few ſuch queſtions ſolemnly propounded to our own hearts, in a calm and ſerious hour, would ſound them, and diſcover much of their ſincerity towards the Lord.

SECT. III.

AND as upright hearts are too apt to apply to themſelves the threats and miſeries of hypocrites, ſo hypocrites, on the contrary, are as apt to catch hold of the promiſes and privileges pertaining to believers.

To detect therefore the ſoul-damning miſtakes of ſuch deceived ſouls, O that theſe following rules might be ſtudied, and faithfully applied to their conviction and recovery.

Rule 1. *It is not enough to clear a man from hypocriſy, that he knows not himſelf to be an hypocrite.* All hypocrites are not deſigning hypocrites; they deceive themſelves as well as others: "Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, have we not prophe-"ſied in thy name," *&c.* Matth. vii. 22. Hell will be a mere ſurprizal to multitudes of profeſſors: a man may live and die in a blind, ungrounded confidence of his ſafe condition, and not fear his ruin, till he begins to feel it.

Rule 2. *Zeal and forwardneſs in the cauſe of God, and for the reformation of his worſhip, will not clear a man from the danger of hypocriſy.* Jehu was a zealous reformer, and yet but a painted ſepulchre. In the year 1549, reformation grew ſo much in reputation, even among the nobles and gentry in Germany, that many of them cauſed theſe five letters, *V. D. M. I. Ae.* being the initial letters of theſe words, *Verbum Domini manet in aeternum*: i. e *The word of the Lord abideth for ever*, to be wrought, or embroidered, or ſet in plates, ſome upon their clokes, and others upon the ſleeves of their garments; to ſhew to all the world, ſaith * my author, that forſaking all Popiſh traditions, they would now cleave to the pure doctrine and diſcipline of the eternal Word.

And no doubt they would have been as good as their word, if what was embroidered on their clokes, had been engraven on their hearts; but, *Come, ſee my zeal*, mars all.

Rule 3. *It is no ſufficient evidence of a man's own integrity, that*

* *John Wolfe, Lect. Memor. Tom. 2. ad Anno* 1549.

he hates hypocrisy in another: for, as one proud man may hate another, and he that is covetous himself, will be apt to censure another for being so; lusts may be contrary to one another, as well as all of them contrary to grace; so may an hypocrite loath that in another, which yet he alloweth in himself: Nay, it is the policy of some to declaim against the hypocrisy of others, thereby to hide their own. Hypocrites are none of the most modest censurers of others, Psal. xxxv. 16. A salt jest seasoned their meat.

Rule 4. *The mere performance of private duties will not clear a man from hypocrisy.* The influence of education, or support of reputation, or the impulse of a convinced conscience may incline a man to it; and yet all this while his heart may not be carried thither with hungry and thirsty desires after God: it is not the matter of any duty that distinguishes the sound and unsound professors; but the motives, designs, and ends of the soul in them.

Rule 5. *The vogue and opinions you have got among Christians, of your sincerity, will not be sufficient to clear you from the danger of hypocrisy.* Christ tells the angel of Sardis, Rev. iii. 1, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." The fall of Hymeneus and Philetus, could never have shaken the faith of the saints as it did, had they not had great credit in the church, and been men of renown for piety among them.

Rule 6. *Your respects and love to them that are the sincere and upright servants of God, will not clear you from the danger of being hypocrites yourselves:* for the bare loving of a Christian is not characteristical and evidential of a man's own Christianity, except he love him, *qua talis*, as he is a Christian, or as he belongs to Christ; and so his sincerity becomes the attractive of thy affection. There are a thousand by-considerations, and respects, that may kindle a man's love to the saints, besides their integrity.

SECT. IV.

WELL, then, if thou wouldst indeed see the unsoundness of thy own heart, propound such heart-sounding questions as these, to thyself.

Quest. 1. Do I engage my heart to approach unto God in the course of my duties? Or do I go in the round of duties, taking no heed to my heart in them? If so, compare this symptom of thy hypocrisy with that in 2 Kings x. 3. and that in Ezek. xxxiii 31, 32.

Queſt. 2. Am I not ſwayed and moved by ſelf-intereſt and carnal reſpects in the ways of religion, the accommodation of ſome wordly intereſt, or getting a name and reputation of godlineſs? If ſo, how apparently do the ſame ſymptoms of hypocriſy appear upon my ſoul, which did upon Judas, John xii. 6. and on Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 13, 14.

Queſt. 3. Have I not ſome ſecret reſerves in my heart, notwithſtanding that face and appearance of zeal which I put on? Certainly if there be any ſin that I cannot part with, any ſuffering for Chriſt which I reſolve againſt in my heart; I am none of his diſciples, my heart is not right with God, the ſearcher of hearts himſelf being Judge, Luke xiv. 26, 27.

Queſt. 4. What conſcience do I make of ſecret ſins? Do I mourn for a vain heart, wandering thoughts, ſpiritual deadneſs? And do I conſcientiouſly abſtain from the practice of ſecret ſins, when there is no danger of diſcovery, no fear of forfeiting my reputation by it? Is it God's eye, or man's, that awes me from commiſſion of ſin? Certainly, if I allow myſelf in ſecret ſins, I am not of the number of God's upright people, whoſe ſpirits are of a contrary temper to mine, Pſal. cxix. 113, and Pſal. xii. 12.

SECT. V.

I Will ſhut up all with five or ſix concluding counſels, (which the Lord impreſs upon the heart of him that writes, and thoſe that ſhall read them) to preſerve and antidote the ſoul againſt the dangerous inſinuation and leaven of hypocriſy.

Counſel. 1. *Intreat the Lord night and day, for a renewed and right ſpirit.* All the helps and directions in the world will not antidote and preſerve you from hypocriſy, nothing will be found able to keep you right, till ſanctification hath firſt ſet you right. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "I will put my Spirit within you; and cauſe "you to walk in my ſtatutes."

A bowl may keep by a ſtrait line, ſo long as the impreſſed force of the hand that delivered it remains ſtrong upon it; but as that wears off, ſo its motions fail, and its own biaſs ſways and turns it. A fright of conſcience, a pang of warm affection, or the influence of ſome great example, or a good education, may influence an unrenewed ſoul, and puſh it on in the way of religion for a ſeaſon; but the heart ſo influenced, muſt, and will return to its own natural courſe again. And I think there wants nothing but time, or a ſuitable temptation, to diſcover the true temper of many a profeſſor's ſpirit: pray, therefore,

as that holy man did, Pſal. cxix. 80. "Let my heart be ſound "in thy ſtatutes, that I be not aſhamed."

Counſel 2. *Always ſuſpect and examine your ends in what you do.* Sincerity and hypocriſy lie much in your ends and deſigns; as they are, ſo are you. The intentions of the heart lie deep; a man may do the ſame action to an holy end, and his perſon and ſervice be accepted with God; which another doing for a corrupt end, it may be reckoned his ſin, and both his perſon and ſervice be abhorred by the Lord. We find two men riding in one chariot, and both of them concerned in the ſame expedition, Jehu, the ſon of Nimſhi, and Jonadab, the ſon of Rechab, 2 Kings x. 15, 23. But though the work they engaged in was one, and the ſame, yet the different ends they aimed at, made the ſame action an excellent duty in Jonadab, and an act of vile hypocriſy in Jehu: *Idem quod duo faciunt, non eſt idem*: It was the ſaying of a good ſoul, commended for a good action: the work indeed is good, but I fear the ends of it. Self ends are creeping, and inſinuating things into the beſt actions.

Counſel 3. *Scare yourſelves with the daily fears of the ſin that is in, and the miſery that will follow hypocriſy.* Look upon it as the moſt odious ſin in the eyes of God and men: to want holineſs, is bad enough, but to diſſimulate and pretend it, when we have it not, is double impiety: to make religion, the moſt glorious thing in the world, a mere ſtirrup to preferment, and a covert to wickedneſs: O how vile a thing is it! God made Chriſt a ſacrifice for ſin, and the hypocrite will make him a cloak for ſin.

And as to the puniſhments that follow it, they are ſuitable to the nature of the ſin; for as hypocriſy is out of meaſure ſinful, ſo the reward and puniſhment of it will be out of meaſure dreadful. Matth. xxiv. 51. "He ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint "him his portion with hypocrites; there ſhall be weeping and "gnaſhing of teeth."

Counſel 4. *Be daily at work in the mortification of thoſe luſts that breed hypocriſy.* It is plain, without much ſifting, that pride, vain-glory, ſelf-love, and a worldly heart, are the ſeeds out of which this curſed plant ſprings up in the ſouls of men. Dig but to the root, and you ſhall certainly find theſe things there; and till the Lord help you to kill and mortify theſe, hypocriſy will ſpring up in all your duties to God, and in all your converſes with men.

Counſel 5. *Attend the native voice of your own conſciences in the day of ſickneſs, fear or trouble, and take ſpecial notice of its*

checks, or upbraidings, which, like a ſtitch in your ſide, will gird you at ſuch times: Commonly in that lies your greateſt danger: Beware of that evil which conſcience brands and marks at ſuch times, whether it be your living in the practice of ſome ſecret ſin, or in the neglects of ſome known duty: Theſe frights of conſcience mark out the corruption, wherein your danger moſtly lies.

Counſel 6. *Let us all that profeſs religion be uniform and ſteady in the profeſſion and practice of it, without politic reſerves, and bye-ends.*

O take heed of this Laodicean neutrality and indifferency which Chriſt hates: Be ſure your ground be good, and then be ſure you ſtand your ground. The religion of time-ſervers is but hypocriſy: They have ſluices in their conſciences which they can open or ſhut as occaſion requires: Every fox will have at leaſt two holes to his den, that if one be ſtopt, he may eſcape at the other. The hypocrite poſeth himſelf ſo evenly in a mediocrity, that, as it is ſaid of Baldwin, Let Anthony win, let Auguſtus win, all is one: So let Chriſt win, or let Antichriſt win, he hopes to make every wind that can blow ſerviceable to waft him to the port of his own intereſt.

The hypocrite hath always more of the moon than of the ſun; little light, many ſpots, and frequent changes: It is eaſier to him to bow to the croſs, than to bear the croſs; to ſin, than to ſuffer.

Our own ſtory tells us of a poor ſimple woman that lived both in the reigns of queen Mary and queen Elizabeth, and would conſtantly ſay her prayers both in Latin and Engliſh, that ſhe might be ſure to pleaſe one ſide or other; and let God, ſaid ſhe, take which likes him beſt. What is noted as an act of ridiculous ſimplicity in her, the time-ſerving hypocrite accounts a point of deep policy in himſelf.

The times under Dioclefian were Pagan; under Conſtantine, Chriſtian; under Conſtantius, Arian; under Julian, Apoſtate; and under Jovian, Chriſtian again: And all this within the ſpace of ſeventy years, the age of one man. O what ſhifting and ſhuffling was there among the men of that generation! The changes of weather ſhew the unſoundneſs of men's bodies, and the changes of times, the unſoundneſs of their ſouls.

Chriſtian, if ever thou wilt manifeſt and maintain thine integrity, be a man but of one deſign, and be ſure that be an honeſt and good deſign, to ſecure heaven, whatever becomes of

earth: To hold faſt integrity, whatever thou art forced to let go for its ſake.

Take heed of pious frauds: Certainly it was the devil that firſt married theſe two words together, for they never did, nor can agree betwixt themſelves, nor was ever ſuch a marriage made in heaven.

Never ſtudy to model religion, and the exerciſes thereof, in a conſiſtency with, or ſubſerviency to your fleſhly intereſts: If your religion be but a mock religion, your reward ſhall be but a mock heaven, that is a real hell.

O the vanity and inutility of theſe projects and deſigns! Men ſtrive to caſt themſelves into ſuch modes, and ſtint themſelves to ſuch meaſures of religion, as they think will beſt promote, or ſecure their earthly intereſts: but it often falls out, contrary to their expectation, that their deep policies are ridiculous follies; they become the grief and ſhame of their friends, and the ſcorn and ſong of their enemies. And often it fares with them, as with him that placed himſelf in the middle of the table, where he could neither reach the diſh above him, nor that below him, *Eſuriunt medii, &c.* and, which is the very beſt of it, if earthly intereſt be accommodated by ſinful neutrality, and a Laodicean indifferency in religion, yet no good man ſhould once feel a temptation to embrace it, except he think what is wanting in the ſweetneſs of his ſleep, may be fully recompenſed to him by the ſtateline ſs of his bed, and richer furniture of his chamber; I mean, that a fuller and higher condition in the world, can make him amends for the loſs of his inward peace, and the quiet repoſe of a good conſcience: Theſe bye-ends and ſelf-intereſts are the little paſſages through which hypocriſy creeps in upon the profeſſors of religion.

O let this be your rejoicing, which was Paul's, "The teſtimony of your conſcience, that in all ſincerity and godly ſimplicity, not in fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, you have had your converſations in this world," 2 Cor. i. 12.

Let that be your daily prayer and cry to heaven, which was David's, Pſal. xxv. 21. "Let integrity and uprightneſs preſerve me, for I wait on thee."

Counſel 7. *Keep your hearts day and night under the awe of God's all-ſeeing eye:* Remember he beholds all your ways, and ponders all your thoughts; how covertly ſoever hypocriſy may be carried for a time, all muſt and will out at laſt, Luke xii. 3. Secreſy is the main inducement to hypocriſy, but it will fall out with the hypocrite, as it did with Ottocar the king of Bohemia, who refuſed to do homage to Rodolphus the emperor, till at laſt

chaſtiſed with war, he was content to do him homage privately in a tent: But the tent was ſo contrived by the emperor's ſervants, that, by drawing one cord, it was taken all away; and ſo Ottocar preſented on his knees doing homage in view of three armies.

Reader, Awe thy heart with God's eye, know that he will bring *every ſecret thing into judgment*. Thus did Job, and it preſerved him, Job xxxi. 1, 4. Thus did David, and it preſerved him, Pſal. xviii. 21, 22, 23. Thus do thou alſo, and it will preſerve thee blameleſs, and without guile to the day of Chriſt.

A

TOKEN

FOR

MOURNERS.

OR,

The Advice of CHRIST to a diſtreſſed Mother, bewailing the Death of her dear and only Son: Wherein the Boundaries of Sorrow are duly fixed, Exceſſes reſtrained, the common Pleas anſwered, and divers Rules for the ſupport of GOD's afflicted Ones preſcribed.

The EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To his dearly beloved brother and ſiſter, Mr. J. C. and Mrs. E. C. the Author wiſheth grace, mercy, and peace.

DEAR FRIENDS,

THE double tye of nature and grace, beſide the many endearing paſſages that for ſo many years have linked and glewed our affections ſo intimately, cannot but beget a tender ſympathy in me with you, under all your troubles, and make

me ſay of every affliction which befals you, Half's mine. I find it is with our affections, as with the ſtrings of muſical inſtruments exactly ſet at the ſame height, if one be touched, the other trembles, though it be at ſome diſtance.

Our affections are one, and ſo in a great meaſure have been our afflictions alſo. You cannot forget that in the years lately paſt, the Almighty viſited my tabernacle with the rod, and in one year, cut off from it the root, and the branch, the tender mother, and the only ſon. What the effects of thoſe ſtrokes, or rather of my own unmortified paſſions were, I have felt, and you and others have heard. Surely I was as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke. Yea, I may ſay with them, Lam. iii. 19, 20. "Remembering mine affliction and my miſery, the worm-"wood and the gall, my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, "and is humbled in me."

I dare not ſay that ever I felt my heart diſcontentedly riſing and ſwelling againſt God; no, I could ſtill juſtify him, when I moſt ſenſibly ſmarted by his hand: If he had plunged me into a ſea of ſorrow, yet I could ſay, in all that ſea of ſorrow, there is not a drop of injuſtice: But it was the over-heating, and over-acting of my fond and unmortified affections and paſſions that made ſo ſad impreſſions upon my body, and caſt me under thoſe diſtempers which ſoon embittered all my remaining comforts to me.

It was my earneſt deſire, ſo ſoon as I had ſtrength and opportunity for ſo great a journey, to viſit you, that ſo, if the Lord had pleaſed, I might both refreſh, and be refreſhed by you, after all my ſad and diſconſolate days. And you cannot imagine what content and pleaſure I projected in that viſit; but it proved to us, as all other comforts of the ſame kind ordinarily do, more in expectation than in fruition: For how ſoon after our joyful meeting and embraces did the Lord overcaſt and darken our day, by ſending death into your tabernacle, to take away the deſire of your eyes with a ſtroke! To crop off that ſweet and only bud from which we promiſed ourſelves ſo much comfort. But no more of that, I fear I am gone too far already. It is not my deſign to exaſperate your troubles, but to heal them; and for that purpoſe have I ſent you theſe papers, which I hope may be of uſe both to you and many others in your condition, ſince they are the after-fruits of my own troubles; things that I have not commended to you from another hand, but which I have, in ſome meaſure, proved and taſted in my own trials.

But I will not hold you longer here, I have only a few things to deſire for, and from you, and I have done.

The things I deſire, are,

Firſt, That you will not be too haſty to get off the yoke which God hath put upon your neck. Remember when your child was in the womb, neither of you deſired it ſhould be delivered thence till God's appointed time was fully come; and now that you travail again with ſorrow for its death: O deſire not to be delivered from your ſorrows one moment before God's time for your deliverance be fully come alſo. Let patience have its perfect work; that comfort which comes in God's way and ſeaſon, will ſtick by you, and do you good indeed.

Secondly, I deſire, that though you and your afflictions had a ſad meeting, yet you and they may have a comfortable parting. If they effect that upon your hearts which God ſent them for, I doubt not but you will give them a fair teſtimony when they go off.

If they obtain God's bleſſing upon them in their operation, ſurely they will have your bleſſing too at their valediction. And what you entertained with fear, you will diſmiſs with praiſe. How ſweet is it to hear the afflicted ſoul ſay, when God is looſing his hands, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

Thirdly, I heartily wiſh that theſe ſearching afflictions may make the more ſatisfying diſcoveries; that you may now ſee more of the evil of ſin, the vanity of the creature, and the fulneſs of Chriſt, than ever you yet ſaw. Afflictions are ſearchers, and put the ſoul upon ſearching and trying its ways, Lam. iii. 14. When our ſin find us out by affliction, happy are we, if, by the light of affliction, we find out ſin. Bleſſed is the man whom God chaſteneth, and teacheth out of his law, Pſal. xciv. 12. There are unſeen cauſes, many times, of our troubles; you have an advantage now to ſift out the ſeeds, and principle from which they ſpring.

Fourthly, I wiſh that all the love and delight you beſtowed on your little one, may now be placed, to your greater advantage, upon Jeſus Chriſt; and that the ſtream of your affection to him may be ſo much the ſtronger, as there are now fewer channels for it to be divided into. If God will not have any part of your happineſs to lie in children, then let it wholly lie in himſelf. If the jealouſy of the Lord hath removed that which drew away too much of your heart from him, and hath ſpoken by this rod, ſaying, Stand aſide, child, thou art in my way, and fillest more room in thy parents hearts than belongs to the

O then deliver up all to him, and ſay, Lord, take the whole heart entirely, and undividedly, to thyſelf. Henceforth let there be no parting, ſharing, or dividing of the affections betwixt God and the creature, let all the ſtreams meet, and centre in thee, only.

Fifthly, That you may be ſtrengthened with all might in the inner man; to all patience, that the peace of God may keep your hearts and minds. Labour to bring your hearts to a meek ſubmiſſion to the rod of your Father. We had fathers of the fleſh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; ſhall we not much more be in ſubjection to the Father of ſpirits, and live? Is it comely for children to conteſt, and ſtrive with their father? Or is it the way to be freed from the yoke, by ſtruggling under it? O that your hearts might be in a like frame with his that ſaid, Lord, thou ſhalt beat, and I will bear. It was a good obſervation that one made, *Anima ſedendo et quieſcendo fit ſapiens:* The ſoul grows wiſe by ſitting ſtill and quiet under the rod. And the apoſtle calls thoſe excellent fruits which the ſaints gather from their ſanctified afflictions, "The peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs," Heb. xii. 11.

Laſtly, My heart's deſire, and prayer to God for you, is, that you may die daily to all viſible enjoyments, and by theſe frequent converſes with death in your family, you may be prepared for your own change and diſſolution, when it ſhall come.

O friends! how many graves have you and I ſeen opened for our dear relations? How oft hath death come up into your windows, and ſummoned the delight of your eyes? It is but a little while, and we ſhall go to them; we and they are diſtinguiſhed but by ſhort intervals.

Tranſivere patres, ſimul hinc tranſibimus omnes.

Our dear parents are gone, our lovely and deſirable children are gone, our boſom relations, that were as our own ſouls, are gone; and do not all theſe warning-knocks at our doors acquaint us, that we muſt prepare to follow ſhortly after them?

O that by theſe things our own death might be both more eaſy, and familiar to us; the oftner it viſits us, the better we ſhould be acquainted with it; and the more of our beloved relations it removes before us, the leſs of either ſnare or intanglement remains for us when our turn comes.

My dear friends, my fleſh, and my blood, I beſeech you, for religion's ſake, for your own ſake, and for my ſake, whoſe com-

part is, in great part, bound up in your prosperity, and welfare, that you read frequently, ponder seriously, and apply believingly these scripture consolations and directions, which, in some haste, I have gathered for your use; and the God of all consolation be with you.

I am,

Your most endeared brother,

JOHN FLAVEL.

A TOKEN FOR MOURNERS.

LUKE vii 13. *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her, Weep not.*

TO be above the stroke of passion, is a condition equal to angels: to be in a state of sorrow, without the sense of sorrow, is a disposition beneath beasts: but duly to regulate our sorrows, and bound our passions under the rod, is the wisdom, duty, and excellency of a Christian. He that is without natural affections, is deservedly ranked amongst the worst of heathens; and he that is able rightly to manage them, deserves to be numbered with the best of Christians. Though, when we are sanctified we put on the divine nature, yet, till we are glorified, we put not off the infirmities of our human nature.

Whilst we are within the reach of troubles, we cannot be without the danger, nor ought not to be without the fear of sin; and it is as hard for us to escape sin, being in adversity, as becalming in prosperity.

How apt are we to transgress the bounds, both of reason and religion, under a sharp affliction, appears, as in most mens experience, so in this woman's example, to whose excessive sorrow Christ puts a stop in the text: "He saw her, and had "compassion on her, and said to her, Weep not."

The lamentations and wailings of this distressed mother, moved the tender compassions of the Lord in beholding them, and stirred up more pity in his heart for her, than could be in her heart for her dear, and only son.

In the words we are to consider, both the condition of the woman, and the counsel of Christ, with respect unto it.

First, The condition of this woman, which appears to be very dolorous and distressed; her groans and tears moved and melted the very heart of Christ to hear and behold them: "When he saw her, he had compassion on her."

How sad an hour it was with her when Christ met her, appears by what is so distinctly remarked by the evangelist, in ver. 12. where it is said, "Now, when they came nigh to the "gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much "people of the city was with her."

In this one verse, divers heart-piercing circumstances of this affliction are noted.

First, It was the *death of a son* *. To bury a child, any child, must needs rend the heart of a tender parent; for what are children but the parent multiplied? A child is a part of the parent made up in another skin: But to lay a son in the grave, a son who continues the name, and supports the family; this was ever accounted a very great affliction.

Secondly, This son was not carried from the craddle to the coffin, nor stripped out of its swathing, to be wrapped in its winding-cloth. Had he died in his infancy, before he had engaged affection, or raised expectation, the affliction had not been so pungent, and cutting as now it was: death smote the son in the flower, and prime of his time. He was a *man*, (saith the evangelist) ver. 12. *a young man*, (as Christ calls him) ver. 14. he was now arrived † at that age which made him ca-

* φιλιας μεγιστος δεσμος ει τεκνων γονεαι. i. e. To be parents to children, is the firmest tye of affection. *Graec. Com.*

† He died in his youth, and was therefore the more to be lamented, because he was cut off in the flower of his age, unto which he was conducted from a child, by the great care and labour of his parents. *Dion. Cat. on the place.*

pable of yielding his mother all that comfort which had been the expectation, and hope of many years, and the reward and fruit of many cares, and labours: yet then, when the endearments were greateſt, and her hopes higheſt, even in the flower of his age, he is cut off.

Thus Baſil bewailed the death of his ſon: * 'I once had a 'ſon, who was a young man, my only ſucceſſor, the ſolace of 'my age, the glory of his kind, the prop of my family, ar-'rived to the endearing age; then was he ſnatched away from 'me by death, whoſe lovely voice but a little before I heard, 'who lately was a pleaſant ſpectacle to his parent.'

Reader, if this hath been thine own condition, as it hath been his that writes it, I need ſay no more to convince thee that it was a ſorrowful ſtate indeed, Chriſt met this tender mother in.

Thirdly, And which is yet more, he was not only a ſon, but an only ſon: ſo you find, in ver. 12. "He was the only ſon "of his mother †;" one in whom all her hopes and comforts, of that kind, were bound up. For, *Omnis in Aſcanio ſtat chari cura parentis*, Virgil. All her affections were contracted into this one object. If we have never ſo many children, we know not which of them to ſpare; if they ſtand, like olive-plants, about our tables, it would grieve us to ſee the leaſt twig amongſt them broken down. But ſurely the death of one out of many, is much more tolerable than all in one ‡.

Hence it is noted in ſcripture as the greateſt of earthly ſorrows, Jer. vi. 26. "O daughter of my people, gird thee with "ſackcloth, and wallow thyſelf in aſhes. Make thee mourn-"ing as for an only ſon, moſt bitter lamentation." Yea, ſo deep and penetrating is this grief, that the Holy Ghoſt borrows it to expreſs the deepeſt ſpiritual troubles by it, Zech.

* *Filius mihi erat, adoleſcens, ſolus vitæ ſucceſſor, ſolatium ſenectæ, gloria generis, ſos æqualium, fulcrum domus, ætatem gratioſiſſimum agebat; hic raptus periit, qui paulo ante jucundam vocem edebat, et jucundiſſimum ſpectaculum parentis oculis erat.*

† She would have borne his death more patiently, had he not been an only ſon; or if ſhe had had but another left behind him to mitigate her ſorrow. *Ambroſe.*

‡ As there is nothing dearer than an only ſon, ſo that grief upon the account of his death, muſt be the greateſt of all. *Carth. in the place.*

xii. 10. "They ſhall mourn for him, (namely Chriſt, whom "they pierced) as one mourneth for an only ſon."

Fourthly, And yet, to heighten the affliction, it is ſuperadded, ver. 12. "And ſhe was a widow." So that the ſtaff of her age, on which ſhe leaned, was broken *: ſhe had now none left to comfort or aſſiſt her, in her helpleſs, comfortleſs ſtate of widowhood; which is a condition not only void of comfort, but expoſed to oppreſſion, and contempt.

Yea, and being a widow, the whole burthen lay upon her alone; ſhe had not an huſband to comfort her, as Elkanah did Hannah, in 1 Sam. i. 8. "Why weepeſt thou, and why is "thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten ſons?" This would have been a great relief; but her huſband was dead, as well as her ſon, both gone, and ſhe only ſurviving, to lament the loſs of thoſe comforts that once ſhe had. Her calamities came not ſingle, but one after another, and this reviving, and aggravating the former. This was her caſe, and condition, when the Lord met her.

Secondly, Let us conſider the counſel which Chriſt gives her, with reſpect to this her ſad, and ſorrowful caſe: "And when "the Lord ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and ſaid unto "her, Weep not." Relieving and ſupporting words; wherein we ſhall conſider,

1. The occaſion.
2. The motive.
3. The counſel itſelf.

1. The occaſion of it, and that was his ſeeing of her. This meeting at the gate of the city, how accidental, and occaſional ſoever it ſeems, yet, without doubt, it was providentially ſuited to the work intended to be wrought: The eye of his omniſcience foreſaw her, and this meeting was by him deſigned as an occaſion of that famous miracle which he wrought upon the young man. Chriſt hath a quick eye to diſcern poor, mourning, and diſconſolate creatures; And though he be now in heaven, and ſtands out of our ſight, ſo that we ſee him not; yet he ſees us, and his eye (which is upon all our troubles) ſtill affects his heart, and moves his bowels for us.

2. The motive ſtirring him up to give this relieving, and comfortable counſel to her, was his own compaſſion: She nei-

* He was moſt dear to her on a twofold account, both becauſe he was her only ſon, and that he was the comfort and ſupport of her widowhood. *Piſcator on the place.*

thet expected, nor desired it from him; but so full of tender pity was the Lord towards her, that he prevents her with unexpected consolation: Her heart was nothing so full of compassion for her son, as Christ was for her; he bore our infirmities, even natural, as well as moral ones, in the days of his flesh; and though he be now exalted to the highest glory, yet still he continues as merciful as ever, and as apt to be touched with the sense of our miseries, Heb. iv. 15.

Lastly, The counsel itself, *Weep not*; herein fulfilling the office of a comforter to them that mourn, whereunto he was anointed, Isa. xvi. 1, 2, 3. Yet the words are not an absolute prohibition of tears, and sorrow; he doth not condemn all mourning as sinful, or all expressions of grief for dead relations, as uncomely; no, Christ would not have his people stupid, and insensate; he only prohibits the excesses, and extravagancies of our sorrows for the dead, that it should not be such a mourning for the dead as is found among the *heathen*, who sorrow without measure, because without hope, being ignorant of that grand relief by the resurrection, which the gospel reveals.

The resurrection of her son from the dead, is the ground upon which Christ builds her consolation, and relief; well might he say, *Weep not*, when he intended quickly to remove the cause of her tears, by restoring him again to life.

Now, though there be somewhat in this case extraordinary, and peculiar, for few or none that carry their dead children to the grave, may expect to receive them again from the dead immediately, by a special resurrection, as she did: I say, this is not to be expected by any that now lose their relations; the occasion and reason of such miraculous, special resurrections, being removed, by a sufficient and full evidence, and confirmation of Christ's divine power and Godhead; yet those that now bury their relations, if they be such as die in Christ, have as good and sufficient reason to moderate their passions, as this mourner had, and do as truly come within the reach and compass of this Christ's comfortable, and supporting counsel, *Weep not*, as she did: For do but consider, what of support or comfort can a particular and present resurrection from the dead give us, more than that it is, and as it is, a specimen, handsel, or pledge of the general resurrection? It is not the returning of the soul to its body, to live an animal life again, in this world of sin and sorrow, and shortly after to undergo the agonies, and pains of death again, that is in itself any such privilege as may afford much comfort to the person raised, or his

relations: It is no privilege to the perſon raiſed, for it returns him from reſt to trouble, from the harbour back again into the ocean. It is matter of trouble to many dying ſaints, to hear of the likelihood of their returning again, when they are got ſo nigh to heaven.

It was once the caſe of a godly miniſter of this nation, who was much troubled at his return, and ſaid, I am like a ſheep driven out of the ſtorm almoſt to the fold, and then driven back into the ſtorm again; or a weary traveller that is come near his home, and then muſt go back to fetch ſomewhat he had forgotten; or an apprentice, whoſe time is almoſt expired, and then muſt begin a new term.

But to die, and then return again from the dead, hath leſs of privilege, than to return only from the brink of the grave; for the ſick hath not yet felt the agonies and laſt ſtruggles, or pangs of death; but ſuch have felt them once, and muſt feel them again; they muſt die twice, before they can be happy once; and, beſides, during the little time they ſpend on earth betwixt the firſt and ſecond diſſolution, there is a perfect *oblivion*, forgetfulneſs, and inſenſibleneſs, of all that which they ſaw, or enjoyed, in their eſtate of ſeparation: It being neceſſary, both for them and others, that it ſhould be. For themſelves it is neceſſary, that they may be content to live, and endure the time of ſeparation from that bleſſed and ineffable ſtate, quietly and patiently *; and for others, that they may live by faith, and not by ſenſe; and build upon divine, and not human authority and report.

So that here you ſee, their agonies, and pangs are doubled, and yet their lives not ſweetened by any ſenſe of their happineſs, which returns and remains with them; and therefore it can be no ſuch privilege to them.

And for their relations: Though it be ſome comfort to receive them again from the dead; yet the conſideration that they are returned to them into the ſtormy ſea, to partake of new ſorrows and troubles, from which they were lately free: And in a ſhort time they muſt part with them again, and feel the double ſorrows of a parting pull, which others feel but once; ſurely ſuch a particular reſurrection, conſidered in itſelf, is no ſuch ground of comfort as at firſt we might imagine it to be.

It remains, then, that the ground of all ſolid comfort and

* *Vitæ ſuæ dii celant, ut vivere durent.*
How long or ſhort men live is kept a myſtery,
To make us both live well and leſs afraid to die.

relief, againſt the death of our relations, lies in the general and laſt reſurrection, and what is in a particular one, is but, as it were, a ſpecimen * and evidence of the general; and there the apoſtle places our relief, 1 Theſ. iv. 17. that we ſhall ſee, and enjoy them again, at the Lord's coming. And ſurely this is more than if (with this mother in the text) we ſhould preſently receive them from the dead, as ſhe did her ſon: And if we judge not ſo, it is becauſe our hearts are carnal, and meaſure things rather by time and ſenſe, than by faith and eternity.

Thus you ſee the counſel, with its ground, which, for the moſt part, is common to other Chriſtian mourners with her; the difference being but inconſiderable, and of little advantage.

Here, then, you find many aggravations of ſorrow meeting together; a ſon, an only ſon, is carrying to the grave; yet Chriſt commands the penſive mother, not to mourn.

Hence we note,

Doct. *That Chriſtians ought to moderate their ſorrows for their dead relations, how many afflicting circumſtances, and aggravations ſoever meet together in their death.*

It is as common with men, yea, with good men, to exceed in their ſorrows for dead relations †, as it is to exceed in their love and delights to living relations; and both of the one, and the other, we may ſay, as they ſay of waters, It is hard to confine them within their bounds. It is therefore grave advice which the apoſtle delivers in this caſe, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. "But this I ſay, brethren, the time is ſhort; it remaineth that "both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and "they that weep, as though they wept not; and thoſe that re-"joice, as though they rejoiced not." As if he had ſaid, the floating world is near its port ‡; God hath contracted the ſails of man's life; it is but a point of time we have to live, and ſhortly it will not be a point to chuſe whether we had wives or not, children or not. All theſe are time-eaten things, and before the expected fruit of theſe comforts be ripe, we ourſelves may be rotten. It is therefore an high point of wiſdom to look upon things which ſhortly will not be, as if already they were not, and to behave ourſelves, in the loſs of theſe carnal

* Therein we have a noble ſpecimen of the future reſurrection. *Calvin on the place.*

† Whatever we love ardently while we have it, we lament bitterly when we loſe it. *Greg mor.*

‡ Καιρος συνεσταλμενος, i. e. the time is contracted.

enjoyments, as the natural man behaves himself in the use of ſpiritual ordinances; he hears as if he heard not, and we ſhould weep as if we wept not; their affections are a little moved, ſometimes by ſpiritual things, but they never lay them ſo to heart, as to be broken-hearted for the ſin they hear of, or deeply affected with the glory revealed. We alſo ought to be ſenſible of the ſtroke of God upon our dear relations; but yet ſtill we muſt weep, as if we wept not; this is, we muſt keep due bounds, and moderation in our ſorrows, and not to be too deeply concerned for theſe dying, ſhort-lived things.

To this purpoſe the apoſtle exhorts, Heb. xii. 5. "My ſon, "deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord, neither faint when "thou art rebuked of him." Theſe are two extremes, deſpiſing, and fainting: when God is correcting, to ſay, I do not regard it, let God take all, if he will; if my eſtate muſt go, let it go; if my children die, let them die: this is to deſpiſe the Lord's chaſtening; and God cannot bear it, that we ſhould bear it thus lightly.

There is alſo another extreme, and that is fainting: if, when goods are taken away, the heart be taken away, and when children die, then the ſpirit of the parent dies alſo; this is fainting under the rod. Thou lamenteſt, ſaith Seneca, thy deceaſed friend; but I would not have thee grieve beyond what is meet: that thou ſhouldſt not grieve at all, I dare not require thee; tears may be excuſed, if they do not exceed. Let thine eyes, therefore, be neither wholly dry, nor let them overflow: weep thou mayeſt, but wail thou muſt not.

Happy man, that ſtill keeps the golden bridle of moderation upon his paſſions, and affections, and ſtill keeps the poſſeſſion of himſelf, whatſoever he loſe the poſſeſſion of.

Now the method in which I propoſe to proceed, ſhall be,

1. To diſcover the ſigns.
2. To diſſuade from the ſin.
3. To remove the pleas.
4. To propoſe the cure of immoderate ſorrow.

Firſt, I ſhall give you the ſigns of immoderate ſorrow, and ſhew you when it exceeds its bounds, and becomes ſinful, even a ſorrow to be ſorrowed for; and, for clearneſs ſake, I will firſt allow what may be allowed to the Chriſtian mourner, and then you will the better diſcern wherein the exceſs and ſinfulneſs of your ſorrow lies.

And, *Firſt*, How much ſoever we cenſure, and condemn immoderate ſorrow; *yet the afflicted muſt be allowed an awakened, and tender ſenſe of the Lord's afflicting hand upon them.*

It is no virtue to bear what we do not feel; yea, it is a moſt unbecoming temper, not to tremble when God is ſmiting.

The Lord ſaith to Moſes, in the caſe of Miriam, Numb. xii. 24. "If her father had ſpit in her face, ſhould ſhe not be "aſhamed ſeven days?" The face is the table, and ſeat of beauty and honour; but when it is ſpit upon, it is made the ſink of ſhame. Had her own father ſpit upon her face when ſhe had diſpleaſed him, would ſhe not have gone aſide, as one aſhamed by ſuch a rebuke, and not have ſhewed her face to him again, in ſeven days? How much more ſhould ſhe take it to heart, and be ſenſible of this rebuke of mine, who have filled her face with leprous ſpots, the ſigns of my diſpleaſure againſt her? Surely God will be aſhamed of thoſe that are not aſhamed when he rebukes them.

It is not magnanimity, but ſtupidity, to make light of God's corrections; and for this the afflicted are ſmartly taxed, Jer. v. 3. "I have ſmitten them, but they have not grieved." When God ſmote Job in his perſon, children, and eſtate, he aroſe, and rent his mantle, and put duſt upon his head, to ſhew he was not ſenſeleſs, and unaffected, and yet bleſſed the afflicting God; which, as plainly ſhewed, he was not contumacious, and unſubmiſſive.

Secondly, *We muſt allow the mourning, afflicted ſoul, a due, and comely expreſſion of his grief, and ſorrow, in his complaints, both to God and men.*

It is much more becoming a Chriſtian, ingenuouſly to open his troubles, than ſullenly to ſmother them. There is no ſin in complaining to God, but much wickedneſs in complaining of him. Griefs are eaſed by groans, and heart-preſſures relieved by utterance. This was David's courſe, and conſtant way, who was a man of afflictions, Pſalm cxlii. 2, 3. "I "poured out my complaint before him, I ſhewed before him "my trouble; when my ſpirit was overwhelmed within me, "then thou knoweſt my path."

To whom ſhould children go, but to their father, to make their moan? Whence may they expect relief, and comfort, but from him? The 102d Pſalm is intituled, "A Pſalm for "the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his "complaint before the Lord."

And happy were it, if every afflicted ſoul would chuſe this way to expreſs his ſorrows. Did we complain more to God, we would complain leſs of us, and quickly abate the matters of

our complaint. O you cannot think how moving, how melting, how prevailing it is with God, when his poor, burdened, and afflicted people, in a day of diſtreſs, and deſpondency, when deep calleth unto deep, and one wave drives on another, then for the oppreſſed ſoul, with humility, filial confidence, and faith, to turn itſelf to the Lord, and thus beſpeak him:

'Father, what ſhall I do? My ſoul is greatly bowed down 'by trouble; I am full to the brim, my vain heart hath looked 'for relief this way, and that way, but none comes; every door 'of comfort is ſhut up againſt me: Thou haſt multiplied my 'ſorrows, and renewed my witneſſes againſt me: Comfort is 'removed from my outward, and peace from my inner man; 'ſharp afflictions without, and bitter reflections within. O 'Lord, I am oppreſſed, undertake for me. Fathers of the 'fleſh pity their diſtreſſed children, when they complain to 'them; and wilt not thou, O Lord, whoſe compaſſions as far 'exceed creature-compaſſions, as the ſea exceeds a drop; O 'my Father! pity me, ſupport me, deliver me.'

O how acceptable is this to God! how advantageous to the ſoul!

We may alſo make our complaint to men. So did Job, chap. xix. ver. 21. "Have pity, have pity on me, O ye my "friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." And it is a mercy if we have any friends that are wiſe, faithful, and experienced; they are born for ſuch a time as this, Prov. xvii. 17. but be they what they will, they cannot pity as God, relieve, and ſuccour as he; and oftentimes we may ſay, with Job, chap. xxi. ver. 4. "As for me, is my complaint to men? "And if it were, why ſhould not my ſpirit be troubled?" *q. d.* What great advantage can I get by theſe complaints? I may burden the heart of my friend, but how little doth that eaſe my own? Yet the very opening of the heart to an experienced, tender Chriſtian, is ſome relief, and the engaging his prayers is more. Thus far you moan ſafely; in all this there is no danger.

Thirdly, *The afflicted perſon may (ordinarily) accuſe, judge, and condemn himſelf, for being the cauſe, and procurer of his own troubles.* He may lawfully be diſcontented, and vexed with himſelf for his own folly, when the iniquity of his heels compaſſeth him about. And truly it is but ſeldom that any great affliction befals a gracious perſon, but he ſaw the need of ſuch a rod, before he felt it.

Hath God ſmitten thy child, or friend, and didſt thou not foreſee ſome ſharp trial coming? Did not thy fond, ſecure,

carnal temper, need such a scourge, to awaken, quicken, and purge thee? Or, if you did not foresee it, it is now your duty to search, and examine yourselves. So the church, in her affliction, resolved, Lam. iii. 40. "Let us search and try our "ways." When God is smiting, we should be a searching: Surely our iniquities will enquire after us, if we will not enquire after them: Yea, in the day of affliction, a gracious soul is inquisitive about nothing more than the procuring, and provoking cause of his troubles. Job x. 2. "Shew me where-"fore thou contendest with me;" *q. d.* Lord, what special corruption is it that this rod is sent to rebuke? What sinful neglect doth it come to humble me for? O discover it now to me, and recover me now from it.

And having found the root, and cause of their troubles, ingenuous souls will shame themselves for it, and give glory to God, by an humble submission, and vindication of the equity of his proceedings. Job vii. 20. "I have sinned, what shall I "do unto thee, thou preserver of men?" He thinks it no shame freely to discover unto God, and deeply to abase himself before him for his folly.

I remember a choice note that * Mr. Brightman hath, in his commentary upon the Canticles.

'Holy men, saith he, after their hearts are renewed by repentance, are not ashamed to remember, and confess their slips, and shameful falls to the glory of God; for they account that glory which such confessions take from them, is not lost, whilst it goes to the glory of God.' If his glory may rise out of our shame, how willing should we be to take such shame to us? Holy David was not ashamed to acknowledge, Psal. xxxviii. 5. "My wounds stink, and are corrupted, because of "my foolishness." He is the wisest man that thus befools himself before God.

It is true, God may afflict from prerogative, or for trial; but we may always see cause enough in ourselves, and it is safest to charge it upon our own folly.

Lastly, *The afflicted Christian may, in an humble, submissive manner, plead with God, and be earnest for the removal of the affliction.*

* *Nec enim pudet sanctos viros, postquam renovata corda fuerint per resipiscentiam, lapsus sui & dedecoris ad Dei gloriam meminisse. Nihil nobis decedit, quod cedit in illius honorem.* Brightman in Cant. c. 1. v. 4. p. 11.

When affliction preſſeth us above ſtrength, when it diſables us for duty, or when it gives advantage to temptation; then we may ſay, with David, "Remove thy ſtroke from me, I am "conſumed by the blow of thine hand," Pſal. xxxix. 10. Even our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the day of his troubles, poured out his ſoul with ſtrong cries, and many tears, ſaying, "Father, "if thou be willing, let this cup paſs from me," Luke xxii. 42. Oppreſſed nature deſires eaſe, and even our renewed nature deſires freedom from thoſe clogs, and temptations, which hinder us in duty, or expoſe us to ſnares.

Thus far we may ſafely go.

But ſorrow then becomes ſinful, and exceſſive, when,

Firſt, *It cauſeth us to ſlight, and deſpiſe all our other mercies, and enjoyments, as ſmall things, in comparison of what we have loſt.*

It often falls out, that the ſetting of one comfort, clouds, and benights all the reſt. Our tears for our loſt enjoyments, ſo blind our eyes, that we cannot ſee the many other mercies which yet remain: We take ſo much notice of what is gone, that we take little or no notice of what is left. But this is very ſinful, for it involves in it both ignorance, ingratitude, and great provocation.

It is a ſin ſpringing from ignorance. Did we know the deſert of our ſins, we ſhould rather wonder to ſee one mercy left, than that twenty are cut off. They that know they have forfeited every mercy, ſhould be thankful that they enjoy any, and patient when they loſe any of their comforts.

Did we know God, even that ſovereign Lord at whoſe diſpoſe our comforts come and go, who can the next moment blaſt all that remain, and turn you into hell afterwards, you would prize the mercies he yet indulges to you, at an higher value. Did you underſtand the fickle, vaniſhing, nature of the creature, what a flower, what a bubble it is; O how thankful would you be, to find ſo many yet left in your poſſeſſion!

Did you know the caſe of thouſands, as good, yea, better than you, whoſe whole harveſt of comfort in this world is but a handful, to the gleanings of the comforts you ſtill enjoy, who in all their lives never were owners of ſuch comfortable enjoyments as you now overlook; ſurely you would not act as you

Beſides, what vile ingratitude is in this? What, are all your remaining mercies worth nothing? You have buried a child, a friend; well, but ſtill you have a huſband, a wife,

other children; or, if not, you have comfortable accommodations for yourselves, with health to enjoy them; or, if not, yet have you the ordinances of God, it may be, an interest in Christ and in the covenant, pardon of sin, and hopes of glory. What, and yet sink at this rate, as if all your mercies, comforts, and hopes, even in both worlds, were buried in one grave. Must Ichabod be written upon your best mercies, because mortality is written upon one? Fy, fy, what shameful ingratitude is here?

And really, friend, such a carriage as this under the rod, is no small provocation to the Lord to go on in judgment, and make a full end of all that remains, so that affliction shall not rise up the second time.

What if God, taking notice how little thou regardest the many undeserved favours thou yet possessest, should say, well, if thou thinkest them not worth the owning, neither do I think them worth the continuing? Go, death, there is a husband, a wife, other children yet left, smite them all. Go, sickness, and remove the health of his body yet left; go, losses, and impoverish his estate yet left; go, reproach, and blast his reputation, which is yet sweet; what would you think of this? And yet, if thou be out of Christ, you are in danger of a far sadder stroke than any, or all yet mentioned; what if God should say, Prizest thou not my mercy? Hast thou no value for my goodness, and forbearance towards thee? Is it nothing that I have spared thee thus long in thy sins, and rebellions? Well, then, I will stretch out my hand upon thy life, cut off that thread which hath kept thee so many years from dropping into hell.

O think, then, what you have done, by provoking the Lord, through your vile ingratitude! It is a dangerous thing to provoke God, when he is already in a way of judgment. And if you be his own people, and so out of the danger of this last and worst stroke; yet know, you have better mercies to lose than any you have yet lost. Should God cloud your souls with doubts, let loose Satan to buffet you, remove joy and peace from your inner man, how soon would you be convinced that the funeral of your dearest friend is but a trifle to this?

Well then, whatever God takes, be still thankful for what he leaves. It was the great sin of Israel in the wilderness, that though God had delivered them from their cruel servitude in Egypt, miraculously fed them in the desart, and was leading them on to a land flowing with milk and honey; yet as soon

as any want did but begin to pinch them, presently all these mercies were forgotten and slighted, Numb. xiv. 12. "Would "to God (say they) we had died in Egypt." And, Numb. xi. 6. "There is nothing at all beside this manna." Beware of this, O ye mourning and afflicted ones. You see both the sin that is in it, and the danger that attends it.

Secondly, And no less sinful are our sorrows, *When they so wholly ingulph our hearts, that we either mind not at all, or are little or nothing sensible of the public evils and calamities, which lie upon the church and people of God.*

Some Christians have such public spirits, that the church's troubles swallow up their personal troubles. Melancthon seemed to take little notice of the death of his child which he dearly loved, being almost overwhelmed with the miseries lying on the church.

And it was a good evidence of the graciousness and publicness of Eli's spirit, who sitting in the gate, anxiously waiting for tidings from the army, when the tidings came that Israel fled before the Philistines, that his two sons Hophni and Phinehas were dead, and that the ark of God was taken, just at the mention of that word, * *The ark of God*, before he heard out the whole narration, his mind quickly presaged the issue, he sunk down and died, 1 Sam. iv. 17. 18. O that was the sinking, the killing word; had the messenger stopt at the death of his two sons, like enough he had supported that burden; but the loss of the ark was more to him than sons or daughters.

But how few such public spirits appear even among professors in this selfish generation? May we not with the apostle complain, Phil. ii. 21. "All seek their own, and not the things "that are of Christ:" Few men have any great cares or designs, lying beyond the bounds of their own private interest. And what we say of cares, is as true of sorrows: If a child die, we are ready to die too, but public calamities pierce us not.

How few suffer either their domestic comforts to be swallowed up in the church's troubles, or their domestic troubles to be swallowed up by the church's mercies! Now when it is thus with us, when we little regard what mercies or miseries

* *Cumque ille nominasset arcam Dei.* q. d. *nondum integram, sed inchoatam audiens narrationem, mente praevidens & exitum praesagiens ruebat.* Mercer. in loc.

be upon others, but are wholly intent upon our own afflictions, this is a sinful sorrow, and ought to be sorrowed for.

Thirdly, Our sorrows then become sinful and exorbitant, *When they divert us from, or distract us in, our duties, so that our intercourse with heaven is stopt and interrupted by them.*

How long can we sit alone musing upon a dead creature? Here our thoughts easily flow; but how hard to fix them upon the living God! when our hearts should be in heaven with our Christ, they are in the grave with our dead. May not many afflicted souls justly complain, that their troubles had taken away their Christ from them, (I mean as to sweet sensible communion) and laid the dead child in his room?

Poor creature, cease to weep any longer for thy dead relation, and weep rather for thy dead heart. Is this thy compliance with God's design in afflicting thee? What, to grow a greater stranger to him than before! Or is this the way to thy cure and comfort in affliction, to refrain prayer, and turn thy back upon God?

Or if thou dareſt not wholly neglect thy duty, yet thy affliction spoils the success and comfort of it; thy heart is wandring, dead, distracted in prayer and meditation, so that thou hast no relief or comfort from it.

Rouze up thyself, Christian, and consider this is not right. Surely the rod works not kindly now. What, did thy love to God expire when thy friend expired? Is thy heart as cold in duty, as his body is in the grave?

Hath natural death seized him, and spiritual deadness seized thee? Sure then thou hast more reason to lament thy dead heart, than thy dead friend. Divert the stream of thy troubles speedily, and labour to recover thyself out of this temper quickly; lest sad experience shortly tell thee, that what thou now mournest for, is but a trifle to what thou shalt mourn for hereafter. To lose the heavenly warmth and spiritual liveliness of thy affections, is undoubtedly a far more considerable loss, than to lose the wife of thy bosom, or the sweetest child that ever a tender parent laid in the grave.

Reader, if this be thy case, thou hast reason to challenge the first place among the mourners. It is better for thee to bury ten sons, than to remit one degree of love or delight in God. The end of God in smiting, was to win thy heart nearer to him by removing that which estranged it; how then dost thou cross the very design of God in this dispensation? Must

God then loſe his delight in thy fellowſhip, becauſe thou haſt loſt thine in the creature? Surely, when thy troubles thus accompany thee to thy cloſet, they are ſinful and extravagant troubles.

Fourthly, Then you may alſo conclude your ſorrows to be exceſſive and ſinful, *When they ſo overload and oppreſs your bodies, as to endanger your lives, or render them uſeleſs and unfit for ſervice.*

Worldly ſorrow works death, 2 Cor. vii. 10. that is, ſorrow after the manner of worldly men *; ſorrow in a mere carnal, natural way, which is not relieved by any ſpiritual reaſonings and conſiderations. This falls ſo heavy ſometimes upon the body, that it ſinks under the weight, and is caſt into ſuch diſeaſes as are never more wrought off, or healed in this world. "Heavineſs in the heart of a man makes it ſtoop," ſaith Solomon, Prov. xii. 25. The ſtouteſt body muſt ſtoop under heart-preſſures.

It is with the mind of man, ſaith one, as with the ſtone *tyrhenus*; as long as it is whole it ſwimmeth; but, once broken, it ſinks preſently. Grief is a moth, which, getting into the mind, will, in a ſhort time, make the body, be it never ſo ſtrong and well-wrought a piece, like an old ſeary garment.

Philoſophers and phyſicians generally reckon ſorrow among the chief cauſes of ſhortning life. Chriſt was a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief, and this ſome think was the reaſon that he appeared as a man of fifty, when he was little more than thirty years old, John viii. 57. But his ſorrows were of another kind †.

Many a man's ſoul is to his body, as a ſharp knife to a thin ſheath, which eaſily cuts it through; and what do we by poring and pondering upon our troubles, but whet the knife that it may cut the deeper and quicker? Of all the creatures that ever God made (devils only excepted) man is the moſt able and apt to be his own tormentor.

How unmercifully do we load our bodies in times of afflictions? How do we not only waſte their ſtrength by ſorrow, but

* Worldly ſorrow is after the manner of the world, ariſing from the love of it. *Eſtius on the place.*

† Theſe things write I unto you, who have wept ſo immoderately, that I am become an example (which I always abhorred) of thoſe whom grief hath overcome. Yet this unreaſonable conduct I now condemn myſelf for. *Senec.*

deny relief and neceſſary refreſhment? They muſt carry the load, but be allowed no refreſhment: If they can eat the bread of affliction, and drink tears, they may feed to the full; but no pleaſant bread, no quiet ſleep is permitted them. Surely you would not burden a beaſt as you do your own bodies: You would pity and relieve a brute beaſt, groaning and ſinking under an heavy burden, but you will not pity nor relieve your own bodies.

Some mens ſouls have given ſuch deep wounds to their bodies, that they are never like to enjoy many eaſy or comfortable days more whilſt they dwell in them.

Now, this is very ſinful and diſpleaſing to God; for if he have ſuch a tender care for our bodies, that he would not have us ſwallowed up of over much grief, no, though it be for ſin, 2 Cor. ii. 7. but even to that ſorrow ſets bounds; how much leſs with outward ſorrow for temporal loſs? May not your ſtock of natural ſtrength be employed to better purpoſes, think you, than theſe? Time may come, that you may earneſtly wiſh you had that health and ſtrength again to ſpend for God, which you now ſo laviſhly waſte, and prodigally caſt away upon your troubles, to no purpoſe or advantage.

It was therefore an high point of wiſdom in David, and recorded no doubt for our imitation, who, when the child was dead, ceaſed to mourn, but aroſe, waſhed himſelf, and eat bread, 2 Sam. xii. 20.

Fifthly, When affliction ſowrs the ſpirit with diſcontent, and makes it inwardly grudge againſt the hand of God, then our trouble is full of ſin, and we ought to be humbled for it before the Lord.

Whatever God doth with us, or ours, ſtill we ſhould maintain good thoughts of him. A gracious heart cleaves nearer and nearer to God in affliction, and can juſtify God in his ſevereſt ſtrokes, acknowledging them to be all juſt and holy, Pſal. cxix. 75. "I know alſo that thy judgments are right, "and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me." And hereby the ſoul may comfortably evidence to itſelf its own uprightneſs and ſincere love to God; yea, it hath been of ſingular uſe to ſome ſouls, to take right meaſures of their love to God in ſuch fals: to have lovely and well-pleaſed thoughts of God, even when he ſmites us in our neareſt and deareſt comforts, argues mainly that we love him for himſelf, and not for his gifts only. And thus his intereſt in the heart is deeper than any creature-intereſt is. And ſuch is the comfort that hath reſulted to ſome

from such discoveries of their own hearts by close smarting afflictions, that they would not part with it, to have their comforts (whose removal occasioned them) given back in lieu of it.

But to swell with secret discontent, and have hard thoughts of God, as if he had done us wrong, or dealt more severely with us than any; O this is a vile temper, cursed fruit springing from an evil root; a very carnal, ignorant, proud heart; or at least from a very distempered, if renewed, heart. So it was with Jonah when God smote his gourd: "Yea, (saith he) I do "well to be angry even unto death," Jonah iv. 9. Poor man, he was highly distempered at this time, and out of frame; this was not his true temper, or ordinary frame, but a surprize; the effect of a paroxism of temptation, in which his passions had been over-heated.

Few dare to vent it in such language: But how many have their hearts imbittered by discontent, and secret risings against the Lord? Which, if ever the Lord open their eyes to see, will cost them more trouble than ever that affliction did, which gave the occasion of it.

I deny not but the best heart may be tempted to think and speak frowardly concerning these works of the Lord; that envious adversary, the devil, will blow the coals, and labour to blow up our spirits at such time into high discontents: The temptation was strong even upon David himself, to take up hard thoughts of God, and to conclude, "Verily I have cleans-"ed my heart in vain;" *q. d.* How little privilege from the worst of evils hath a man by his godliness? But he soon suppressed such motions: "If I should say thus, I should offend "against the generation of thy children:" Meaning, that he should condemn the whole race of godly men through the whole world; for who is there among them all, but is, or hath, or may be, afflicted as severely as myself?

"Surely, it is meet to be said unto God, I have born chastise-"ment, I will not offend any more," Job xxxiv. 31. Whatever God doth with you, speak well, and think well of him, and his works.

Sixthly, *Our sorrows exceed due bounds when we continually excite and provoke them by willing irritations.*

Grief, like a lion, loves to play with us before it destroy us. And strange it is that we should find some kind of pleasure in rouzing our sorrows. It is * Seneca's observation, and expe-

* Sorrow itself has a certain kind of pleasure attending it, when the

rimentally true, that even ſorrow itſelf hath a certain kind of delight attending it.

The Jews, that were with Mary in the houſe to comfort her, "When they ſaw that ſhe went out haſtily, followed her, ſay-"ing, ſhe goeth to the grave to weep there," John xi. 32. as they do, ſaith † Calvin, 'that ſeek to provoke their troubles, 'by going to the grave, or often looking upon the dead bo-'dy.'

Thus we delight to look upon the relics of our deceaſed friends, and often to mention their actions, and ſayings, not ſo much for any matter of holy, and weighty inſtruction, or imitation, for that would warrant, and commend the action; but rather to rub the wound, and fetch freſh blood from it, by piercing ourſelves with ſome little, trivial, yet wounding circumſtances. I have known many that will ſit and talk of the features, actions and ſayings, of their children, for hours together, and weep at the rehearſal of them, and that for many months after they are gone; ſo keeping the wound continually open, and excruciating their own hearts, without any benefit at all by them: A lock of hair, or ſome ſuch trifles, muſt be kept for this purpoſe, to renew their ſorrow daily, by looking on it. On this account, Jacob would not have his ſon called Benoni, leſt it ſhould renew his ſorrow, but Benjamin.

I am far from commending a brutiſh oblivion of our dear relations, and condemn it as much as I do this childiſh, and unprofitable remembrance. O friends! we have other things to do under the rod, than theſe: Were it not better to be ſearching our hearts, and houſes, when God's rod is upon us, and ſtudying how to anſwer the end of it, by mortifying thoſe corruptions which provoke it? Surely the rod works not kindly till it comes to this.

Seventhly, Laſtly, Our ſorrows may then be pronounced ſinful, when they deafen our ears to all the wholeſome, and ſeaſonable words of counſel, and comfort, offered us for our relief, and ſupport.

Jer. xxxi. 15. "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation 'and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, would 'not be comforted for her children, becauſe they were not."

he parents call to mind the pleaſant ſayings, the chearful converſation, and the filial affection of their children, then their eyes are refreſhed as it were with a kind of joy.

† *Ex eorum more qui luctus ſui irritamenta quaerunt.* Calvin.

She will admit no comfort, her diſeaſe is curable by no other means but the reſtoration of her children; give her them again, and ſhe will be quiet; elſe you ſpeak into air, ſhe regards not whatever you ſay.

Thus Iſrael, in the cruel bondage in Egypt, Moſes brings them the glad tidings of deliverance; "But they hearkened "not to him, b cauſe of the anguiſh of ſpirit, and their cruel "bondage," Exod. vi. 9.

Thus obſtinately fixed are many, in their trouble, that no words of advice, or comfort, find any place with them; yea, I have known ſome exceeding quick and ingenuous, even above the rate of their common parts and abilities, in inventing ſhifts, and framing objections to turn off comfort from themſelves, as if they had been hired to plead againſt their own intereſt; and if they be driven from thoſe pleas, yet they are ſettled in their troubles, too faſt to be moved; ſay what you will, they mind it not, or, at moſt, it abides not upon them. Let proper, ſeaſonable advice, or comfort, be tendered, they refuſe it; your counſel is good, but they have no heart to it now. Thus, Pſal. lxxvii. 10. "My ſoul (ſaith he) refuſed to be "comforted."

To want comfort in time of affliction, is an aggravation of our affliction; but to refuſe it when offered us, wants not ſin. Time may come when we would be glad to receive comfort, or hear a word of ſupport, and ſhall be denied it.

O it is a mercy to the afflicted to have Barnabas with them, an interpreter, one among a thouſand; and it will be the great ſin, and folly of the afflicted, to ſpill, like water upon the ground, thoſe excellent cordials, prepared and offered to them, out of a froward, or dead ſpirit, under trouble. Say not with them, Lam. iii. 18, 19. "My hope is periſhed from "the Lord, remembring mine affliction and my miſery, the "wormwood and the gall." It is a thouſand pities the wormwood and gall of affliction ſhould ſo diſguſt a Chriſtian, as that he ſhould not at any time be able to reliſh the ſweetneſs that is in Chriſt, and in the promiſes. And thus I have diſpatched the firſt part of my deſign, in ſhewing you wherein the ſin of mourners doth not lie, and in what it doth.

Secondly, Having cleared this, and ſhewn you wherein the ſin and danger lies; my way is now prepared to the ſecond thing propoſed, namely, to diſſuade mourners from theſe ſinful exceſſes of ſorrows, and keep the golden bridle of moderation upon their paſſions in times of affliction. And O that my words may be as ſucceſsful upon thoſe penſive ſouls that

shall read them, as Abigail's were to David, 1 Sam. xxv. 32. who, when he perceived how proper and seasonable they were, said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee this "day to meet me, and blessed be thy advice."

I am sensible how hard a task it is I here undertake, to charm down, and allay mutinous, raging, and tumultuous passions; to give a check to the torrent of passion, is ordinarily but to provoke it, and make it rage and swell the more.

The work is the Lord's, it wholly depends upon his power, and blessing. He that saith to the sea, when the waves thereof roar, be still; can also quiet, and compose the stormy, and tumultuous sea, that rages in the breasts of the afflicted, and casts up nothing but the froth of vain and useless complaints of our misery, or the dirt of sinful and wicked complaints of the dealings of the Lord with us.

The rod of affliction goes round, and visits all sorts of persons, without difference: it is upon the tabernacles of the just and the unjust, the righteous and the wicked; both are mourning under the rod.

The godly are not so to be minded, as that the other be wholly neglected; they have as strong and tender, though not as regular affections to their relations, and must not be wholly suffered to sink under their unrelieved burdens.

Here, therefore, I must have respect to two sorts of persons, whom I find in tears upon the same account; I mean, the loss of their dear relations, the regenerate, and the unregenerate. I am a debtor to both, and shall endeavour their support and assistance, for even the unregenerate call for our help and pity, and must not be neglected, and wholly slighted, in their afflictions. We must pity them that cannot pity themselves *. The law of God commands us to help a beast, if fallen under its burden; how much more a man sinking under a load of sorrows?

I confess, uses of comfort to the unregenerate are not (ordinarily) in use among us, and it may seem strange whence any thing of support should be drawn for them, that have no special interest in Christ, or promises.

I confess, also, I find myself under great disadvantages for this work; I cannot offer them those reviving cordials that are contained in Christ and the covenant, for God's afflicted people; but yet, such is the goodness of God even to his ene-

* *Nil miserius misero non miserante seipsum*, i. e. None is more to be pitied than a poor sinner that does not pity himself.

mies, that they are not left wholly without ſupports, or means to allay their ſorrow.

If this, therefore, be thy caſe, who readeſt theſe lines; afflicted and unſanctified, mourning bitterly for thy dead friends, and more cauſe to mourn for thy dead ſoul, chriſtleſs and graceleſs, as well as childleſs, or friendleſs: no comfort in hand, nor yet in hope; full of trouble, and no vent by prayer, or faith, to eaſe thy heart.

Poor creature, thy caſe is ſad, but yet do not wholly ſink, and ſuffer thyſelf to be ſwallowed up of grief: thou haſt laid thy dear one in the grave, yet throw not thyſelf, headlong in, to the grave after him; that will not be the way to remedy thy miſery: but ſit down a while, and ponder theſe three things.

Firſt, *That of all perſons in the world, thou haſt moſt reaſon to be tender over thy life, and health, and careful to preſerve it; for if thy troubles deſtroy thee, thou art eternally loſt, undone for ever.* "Worldly ſorrow (ſaith the apoſtle) works death." And if it works thy death, it works thy damnation alſo; for hell follows that pale horſe, Rev. vi. 8. If a believer dies, there is no danger of hell to him, the ſecond death hath no power over him; but woe to thee, if it overtake thee in thy ſin: beware, therefore, what thou doſt againſt thy health, and life; do not put the candle of ſorrow too near that thread by which thou hangeſt over the mouth of hell.

O it is far better to be childleſs, or friendleſs on earth, than hopeleſs, and remedileſs, in hell.

Secondly, Own and admire the bounty and goodneſs of God, manifeſted to thee in this affliction; that when death came into thy family to ſmite, and carry off one, it had not fallen to thy lot to be the perſon; thy huſband, wife, or child is taken, and thou art left: had thy name been in the commiſſion, thou hadſt been now paſt hope.

O the ſparing mercy of God! the wonderful long-ſuffering of God towards thee! Poſſibly that poor creature that is gone, never provoked God as thou haſt done; thy poor child never abuſed mercies, neglected calls, treaſured up the ten thouſandth part of that guilt that thou haſt done: ſo that thou mighteſt well imagine it ſhould rather have cut thee down, that hadſt ſo provoked God, than thy poor little one.

But, O the admirable patience of God! O the riches of his long-ſuffering! Thou art only warned, not ſmitten by it: is there nothing in this, worth thankful acknowledgment? Is it not better to be in black for another on earth, than in the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever? Is it not eaſier to go to the

grave with thy dead friend, and weep there, than to go to hell among the damned, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth?

Thirdly, This affliction, for which thou mourneſt, may be the greateſt mercy to thee, that ever yet befel thee in this world. God hath now made thy heart ſoft by trouble, ſhewed thee the vanity of this world, and what a poor trifle it is which thou madeſt thy happineſs: there is now a dark cloud ſpread over all thy wordly comforts. Now, O now! if the Lord would but ſtrike in with this affliction, and by it open thine eyes to ſee thy deplorable ſtate, and take off thy heart for ever from the vain world, which thou now ſeeſt hath nothing in it; and cauſe thee to chuſe Chriſt, the only abiding good, for thy portion. If now thy affliction may but bring thy ſin to remembrance, and thy dead friend may but bring thee to a ſenſe of thy dead ſoul, which is as cold to God, and ſpiritual things, as his body is to thee; and more lothſome in his eyes than that corpſe is, or ſhortly will be to the eyes of men: then this day is certainly a day of the greateſt mercy that ever yet thou ſaweſt. O happy death, that ſhall prove life to thy ſoul.

Why this is ſometimes the way of the Lord with men, Job xxxvi. 8, 9. "If they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords "of affliction, then he ſheweth them their work, and their "tranſgreſſion, that they have exceeded: he openeth, alſo, "their ear to diſcipline, and commandeth them that they re"turn from iniquity."

O conſider, poor penſive creature, that which ſtole away thy heart from God, is now gone; that which eat up thy time, and thoughts, that there was no room for God, ſoul, or eternity, in them, is gone: all the vain expectations that thou raiſedſt up unto thyſelf, from that poor creature which now lies in the duſt, are in one day quite periſhed. O what an advantage haſt thou now for heaven, beyond whatever thou yet hadſt! if God will but bleſs this rod, thou wilt have cauſe to keep many a thankſgiving day for this day.

I pray, let theſe three things be pondered by you. I can beſtow no more comforts upon you, your condition bars the beſt comforts from you, they belong to the people of God, and you have yet nothing to do with them.

I ſhall therefore turn from you to them, and preſent ſome choicer comforts to them, to whom they properly belong, which may be of great uſe to you in reading, if it be but to convince you of the bleſſed privilege and ſtate of the people of God in the greateſt plunges of troubles in this world, and what advan-

tages their intereſt in Chriſt gives them for peace and ſettlement, beyond that ſtate you are in.

And here I do with much more freedom, and hope of ſucceſs, apply myſelf to the work of counſelling, and comforting the afflicted. You are the fearers of the Lord, and tremble at his word; the leaſt ſin is more formidable to you, than the greateſt affliction: doubtleſs you would rather chuſe to bury all your children, than provoke and grieve your heavenly Father. Your relations are dear, but Chriſt is dearer to you by far.

Well then, let me perſuade you to retire a while into your cloſets, redeem a little time from your unprofitable ſorrows, eaſe and empty your hearts before the Lord, and beg his bleſſing upon the relieving, quieting, and heart-compoſing conſiderations that follow; ſome of which are more general and common, ſome more particular and ſpecial; but all of them ſuch as, through the bleſſing of God, may be very uſeful, at this time, to your ſouls.

Conſideration 1. *Conſider, in this day of ſorrow, who is the framer, and author of this rod, by which you now ſmart; is it not the Lord? And if the Lord hath done it, it becomes you meekly to ſubmit.* Pſal. xlvi. 10. "Be ſtill, and know that I "am God."

Man and man ſtand upon even ground; if your fellow-creature does any thing that diſpleaſes you, you may not only enquire who did it, but why he did it? You may demand his grounds and reaſons, for what he hath done; but you may not do ſo here: It is expected, that this one thing, *The Lord hath done it*, ſhould, without any farther diſputes, or conteſts, ſilence and quiet you, whatever it be that he hath done. Job xxxiii. 13. "Why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him? For he giveth "not an account of any of his matters." The Supreme Being muſt needs be an unaccountable and uncontroulable being.

It is a ſhame for a child to ſtrive with his father; a ſhame for a ſervant to contend with his maſter; but for a creature to quarrel and ſtrive with the God that made him, O how ſhameful is it! Surely it is highly reaſonable that you be ſubject to that will whence you proceeded, and that he who formed you, and yours, ſhould diſpoſe of both as ſeemeth him good. It is ſaid, 2 Sam. iii. 36. "That whatſoever the king did, pleaſed "all the people:" And ſhall any thing the Lord doth diſpleaſe you? He can do no wrong: If we pluck a roſe in the bud, as we walk in our gardens, who ſhall blame us for it? It is our own, and we may crop it off when we pleaſe: Is not

this the caſe? Thy ſweet bud, which was cropt off before it was fully blown, was cropt off by him that owned it, yea, by him that formed it. If his dominion be abſolute, ſure his diſpoſal ſhould be acceptable.

It was ſo to good Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let "him do what ſeemeth him good:" And it was ſo to David, Pſal. xxxix. 9. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; be-"cauſe thou didſt it." O let it be for ever remembered, "That he whoſe name alone is Jehovah, is the moſt High o-"ver all the earth," Pſalm lxxxiii. 18.

The glorious ſovereignty of God, is illuſtriouſly diſplayed in two things, his decrees and his providences: With reſpect to the firſt, he ſaith, Rom. ix. 15. "I will have mercy on whom "I will have mercy." Here is no ground of diſputing with him; for ſo it is ſaid, ver. 20. "Who art thou, O man, that "replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that "formed it, why haſt thou made me thus?" Hath not the potter power over the clay?

And as to his providences, wherein his ſovereignty is alſo manifeſted; it is ſaid, Zech. ii. 14. "Be ſilent, O all fleſh, "before the Lord, for he is raiſed up out of his habitation." It is ſpoken of his providential working in the changes of kingdoms, and deſolations that attend them.

Now, ſeeing the caſe ſtands thus, that the Lord hath done it; it is his pleaſure to have it ſo, and that if it had not been his will, it could never have been as it is; he that gave thee (rather lent thee) thy relation, hath alſo taken him: O how quiet ſhould this conſideration leave thee? If your landlord, who has many years ſuffered you to dwell in his houſe, does at laſt warn you out of it, though he tells you not why; you will not contend with him, or ſay he has done you wrong: Much leſs if he tells you it will be more for his profit, and accommodation, to take it into his own hand, than let it to you any longer.

Doubtleſs, reaſon will tell you, you ought quietly to pack up, and quit it. It is your great landlord, from whom you hold (at pleaſure) your own, and your relations lives, that hath now warned you out from one of them, it being more for his glory, it may be, to take it in his own hands, by death; and muſt you diſpute the caſe with him?

Come, Chriſtian, this no way becomes thee, but rather, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be "the name of the Lord." Look off from a dead creature, lift

up thine eyes to the sovereign, wise, and holy pleasure that ordered this affliction: Consider who he is, and what thou art; yea, pursue this consideration till thou canst say, I am now filled with the will of God.

Consideration 2. *Ponder well the quality of the comfort you are deprived of, and remember, that when you had it, it stood but in the rank and order of common and inferior comforts.*

Children, and all other relations, are but common blessings, which God indifferently bestows upon his friends, and enemies: and by the having or losing of them, no man knows either love or hatred. It is said of the wicked, Psal. lxxiii. 14. that they are full of children; yea, and of children that do survive them too; for, *they leave their substance to their babes.* Full of sin, yet full of children, and these children lively inherit their parents sins and estates together.

It is the mistaking of the quality, and nature of our enjoyments, that so plunges us into trouble when we lose them. We think there is so necessary a connection betwixt these creatures, and our happiness, that we are utterly undone when they fail us.

But this is our mistake, there is no such necessary connection, or dependance; we may be happy without these things: It is not father, mother, wife, or child, in which our chief good and felicity lies; we have higher, better, and more enduring things than these; all these may perish, and yet our soul be secure and safe; yea, and our comfort in the way, as well as end, may be safe enough, though these are gone: God hath better things to comfort his people with, than these, and worse rods to afflict you with, than the removal of these. Had God let your children live, and flourish; and given you ease and rest in your tabernacle, but in the mean time inflicted spiritual judgments upon your souls; how much more sad had your case been?

But as long as our best mercies are all safe, the things that have salvation in them remain, and only the things that have vanity in them are removed; you are not prejudiced, or much hindered as to the attainment of your last end, by the loss of these things.

Alas! it was not Christ's intent to purchase for you a sensual content in the enjoyment of these earthly comforts; but to redeem you from all iniquity, purge your corruptions, sanctify your natures, wean your hearts from this vain world; and so to dispose and order your present condition, that, finding no rest and content here, you might the more ardently pant,

and ſigh after the reſt which remains for the people of God. And are you not in as probable a way to attain this end now, as you were before? Do you think you are not as likely, by theſe methods of providence, to be weaned from the world, as by more pleaſant and proſperous ones? Every wiſe man reckons that ſtation and condition to be beſt for him, which moſt promotes, and ſecures his laſt end, and great deſign.

Well then, reckon you are as well without theſe things as with them; yea, and better too, if they were but clogs and ſnares upon your affections; you have really loſt nothing, if the things wherein your eternal happineſs conſiſteth be yet ſafe. Many of God's deareſt children have been denied ſuch comforts as theſe, and many have been deprived of them, and yet never the farther from Chriſt, and heaven, for that.

Conſideration 3. *Always remember, that how ſoon and unexpected ſoever your parting with your relations was, yet your leaſe was expired before you loſt them, and you enjoyed them every moment of the time that God intended them for you.*

Before this relation, whoſe loſs you lament, was born, the time of your enjoyment, and ſeparation, was unalterably fixed and limited in heaven, by the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh; And although it was a ſecret to you, whilſt your friend was with you; yet now it is a plain and evident thing, that this was the time of ſeparation before appointed; and that the life of your friend could by no means be protracted, or abbreviated, but muſt keep you company juſt ſo far, and then part with you.

This poſition wants no full and clear ſcripture authority for its foundation: How pregnant and full is that text, Job xiv. 5, 6. "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his "months are with thee: thou haſt appointed him his bounds, "which he cannot paſs."

The time of our life, as well as the place of our habitation, was prefixed, before we were born.

It will greatly conduce to your ſettlement, and peace, to be well eſtabliſhed in this truth; that the appointed time was fully come, when you and your dear relation parted; for it will prevent and ſave a great deal of trouble which comes from our after-reflections.

O if this had been done, or that omitted; had it not been for ſuch miſcarriages, and overſights, my dear huſband, wife, or child, had been alive, at this day! No, no, the Lord's time

was fully come, and all things concurred, and fell in together to bring about the pleasure of his will; let that satisfy you: Had the ablest physicians in the world been there, or had they that were there prescribed another course, as it is now, so it would have been when they had done all. Only it must be precautioned, that the decree of God no way excuses any voluntary, or sinful neglects, or miscarriages. God over-rules these things to serve his own ends, but no way approves them; but it greatly relieves, against all our involuntary, and unavoidable oversights and mistakes about the use of means, or the timing of them; for it could not be otherwise than now it is.

Objection. But many things are alledged against this position, and that with much seeming countenance from such scriptures as these; Psal. liv. 25. "Blood-thirsty men shall not live "out half their days." Eccles. vii. 18. "Why shouldst thou "die before thy time." Psal. cii. 24. "O, my God, take me "not away in the midst of my days." Isa. xxvii. 10. "I am "deprived of the residue of my years." And, Prov. x. 27. "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the "wicked shall be shortened." It is demanded, what tolerable sense we can give these scriptures, whilst we assert an unalterable fixation of the term of death.

Solution. The sense of all these scriptures will be cleared up to full satisfaction, by distinguishing death, and the terms of it.

First, We must distinguish death into
Natural, and
Violent.

The wicked, and blood-thirsty man, shall not live out half his days; (*i. e.*) half so long as he might live, according to the course of nature, or the vigour, and soundness of his natural constitution; for his wickedness either drowns nature in an excess of riot and luxury, or exposes him to the hand of justice, which cuts him off for his wickedness before he hath accompliished half his days.

Again, we must distinguish of the term, or limit for death, which is either
General, or
Special.

The general limits are now seventy, or eighty years, Psal. xc. 19. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten, "and if by reason of strength they are fourscore years, yet is "their strength labour and sorrow." To this short limit the

life of man is generally reduced, ſince the flood; and though there are ſome few exceptions, yet the general rule is not thereby deſtroyed.

The ſpecial limit is that proportion of time, which God, by his own counſel and will, hath allotted to every individual perſon; and it is only known to us by the event: This we affirm to be a fixed, and immoveable term; with it all things ſhall fall in, and obſerve the will of God in our diſſolution at that time. But becauſe the general limit is known, and this ſpecial limit is a ſecret hid in God's own breaſt; therefore man reckons by the former account, and may be ſaid, when he dies at thirty, or forty years old, to be cut off in the midſt of his days: For it is ſo, reckoning by the general account, though he be not cut off till the end of his days, reckoning by the ſpecial limit.

Thus he that is wicked, dies before his time; (*i. e.*) the time he might attain to in an ordinary way; but not before the time God hath appointed: And ſo in all other objected ſcriptures.

It is not proper at all, in a ſubject of this nature, to digreſs into a controverſy: Alas! the poor mourner, overwhelmed with grief, hath no pleaſure in that; it is not proper for him at this time, and therefore I ſhall, for the preſent, wave the controverſy, and wind up this conſideration with an humble, and ſerious motion to the afflicted, that they will wiſely conſider the matter. The Lord's time was come, your relations lived with you every moment that God intended them for you before you had them.

O parents! mind this, I beſeech you; the time of your child's continuance in the womb, was fixed to a minute by the Lord; and when the parturient fulneſs of that time was come, were you not willing it ſhould be delivered thence into the world? The tender mother would not have it abide one minute longer in the womb, how well ſoever ſhe loved it; and is there not the ſame reaſon we ſhould be willing, when God's appointed time is come to have it delivered by death out of this ſtate, which, in reſpect of the life of heaven, is but as the life of a child in the womb, to its life in the open world.

And let none ſay the death of children is a premature death, God hath ways to ripen them for heaven, whom he intends to gather thither betimes, the which we know not: in reſpect of fitneſs, they die in a full age, though they be cut off in the bud of their time.

He that appointed the ſeaſons of the year, appointed the ſea-

ſons of our comfort in our relations: And as thoſe ſeaſons cannot be altered, no more can theſe. All the courſe of providence is guided by an unalterable decree; what falls out caſually to our apprehenſion, yet falls out neceſſarily in reſpect of God's appointment.

O therefore be quieted in it, this muſt needs be as it is.

Conſider. 4. *Hath God ſmitten your darling, and taken away the delight of your eyes with this ſtroke? Bear this ſtroke with patience and quiet ſubmiſſion: For how know you but your trouble might have been greater from the life, than it is now from the death of your children?*

Sad experience made a holy man once to ſay, It is better to weep for ten dead children, than for one living child: A living child may prove a continual dropping, yea, a continual dying to the parent's heart. What a ſad word was that of David to Abiſhai, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. "Behold, (ſaith he) my ſon, "which came out of my bowels, ſeeketh my life." I remember Seneca, in his conſolatory epiſtle to his friend Marullus, brings in his friend thus aggravating the death of his child.

'O, (ſaith Marullus) had my child lived with me, to how 'great modeſty, gravity, and prudence, might my diſcipline 'have formed and moulded him? But, ſaith * Seneca, (which 'is more to be feared) he might have been as others moſtly 'are; for look, (ſaith he) what children come even out of the 'worthieſt families; ſuch who exerciſe both their own, and 'others luſts; in all whoſe life there is not a day without the 'mark of ſome notorious wickedneſs upon it.'

I know your tender love to your children will ſcarce admit ſuch jealouſies of them; they are, for the preſent, ſweet, lovely, innocent companions, and you doubt not but by your care of their education, and prayer for them, they might have been the joy of your hearts.

Why doubtleſs Eſau, when he was little, and in his tender age, promiſed as much comfort to his parents as Jacob did; and I queſtion not but Iſaac and Rebecca (a glorious pair) ſpent as many prayers, and beſtowed as many holy counſels upon him, as they did upon his brother: But when the child grew up to riper years, then he became a ſharp affliction to his parents; for it is ſaid, Gen. xxvi. 34. "That when Eſau was forty years "old, he took to wife Judith the daughter of Berith the Hittite, "which was a grief of mind to Iſaac and Rebecca." The word in the original comes from a root that ſignifies to im-

* Seneca's Epiſtles. p. 84.

bitter*: This child imbittered the minds of his parents by his rebellion against them, and despising their counsels.

And I cannot doubt but Abraham disciplined his family as strictly as any of you; never man received a higher encomium from God, upon that account. Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, "that he will command his children, and his household, after "him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Nor can I think but he bestowed as many, and as frequent prayers for his children, and particularly for his son Ishmael, as any of you: We find one, and that a very pathetical one, recorded, Gen. xvii. 18. "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" And yet, you know how he proved, a son that yielded him no more comfort than Esau did to Jacob and Rebecca.

O how much more common is it for parents to see the vices and evils of their children, than their virtues and graces? And where one parent lives to rejoice in beholding the grace of God shining forth in the life of his child, there are twenty, it may be an hundred, that live to behold, to their vexation and grief, the workings of corruption in them.

It is a note of † Plutarch, in his morals, Nicolas (saith he) lived not to see the noble victory obtained by Themistocles, his son; nor Miltiades, to see the battle his son Cimon won in the field; nor Xantippus, to hear his son Pericles preach, and make orations. Ariston never heard his son Plato's lectures and disputations; but men (saith he) commonly live to see their children fall a gaming, revelling, drinking, and whoring: Multitudes live to see such things to their sorrow. And if thou be a gracious soul, O what a cut would this be to thy very heart! to see those (as David spake of his Absalom) that came out of thy bowels, to be sinning against God, that God, whom thou lovest, and whose honour is dearer to thee than thy very life!

But, admit they should prove civil, and hopeful children, yet mightest thou not live to see more misery come upon them than thou couldest endure to see? O think what a sad and doleful sight was that to Zedekiah, Jer. l. 10. "The king of "Babylon brought his children, and slew them before his eyes." Horrid spectacle! and that leads to

Consider. 5. *How know you, but by this stroke which you so lament, God hath taken them away from the evil to come?*

Is is God's usual way, when some extraordinary calamities are coming upon the world, to hide some of his weak and ten-

* *Erant amaritudo animi.* † Plutarch's Morals, p. 222.

der ones out of the way by death, Isa. lvii. 1, 2. he cuts some, and removes others, but taketh care for the security of all. He provided a grave for Methuselah before the flood. The grave is an hiding-place to some, and God sees it better for them to be under ground, than above ground, in such evil days.

Just as a careful and tender father, who hath a son abroad at school, hearing the plague is broken out in, or near the place, sends his horse presently to fetch home his son, before the danger and difficulty be greater. Death is our Father's pale horse, which he sends to fetch home his tender children, and carry them out of harm's way.

Surely when national calamities are drawing on, it is far better for our friends to be in the grave in peace, than exposed to the miseries and distresses that are here, which is the meaning of Jer. xxii. 10. "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan "him; but weep for him that goeth away, for he shall return "no more, nor see his native country."

And is there not a dreadful sound of troubles, now in our ears? Do not the clouds gather blackness? Surely all things round about us seem to be preparing and disposing themselves for affliction. The days may be nigh in which you shall say, "Blessed is the womb that never bare, and the paps that never "gave suck."

It was in the day wherein the faith and patience of the saints were exercised, that John heard a voice from heaven, saying to him, "Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord "from henceforth."

Thy friend by an act of favour is disbanded by death, whilst thou thyself art left to endure a great fight of affliction. And now if troubles come, thy cares and fears will be so much the less, and thy own death so much the easier to thee; when so much of thee is in heaven already. In this case the Lord, by a merciful dispensation, is providing both for their safety, and thy own easier passage to them.

In removing thy friends before-hand, he seems to say to thee, as he did to Peter, John xiii. 7. "What I do thou know-"est not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." The eye of providence hath a prospect far beyond thine; probably it would be a harder task for thee to leave them behind, than to follow them.

A tree that is deeply rooted in the earth, requires many strokes to fell it; but when its roots are loosed before-hand, then an easy stroke lays it down upon the earth.

Conſider 6. *A parting time muſt needs come, and why is not this as good as another?* You knew before-hand your child or friend was mortal, and that the thread that linked you together muſt be cut. If any one, ſaith Baſil, had aſked you, when your child was born, What is that which is born? What would you have anſwered? Would you not have ſaid, It is a man? And if a man, then a mortal, vaniſhing thing. And why then are you ſurprized with wonder to ſee a dying thing dead?

He, ſaith * Seneca, who complains that one is dead, complains that he was a man. All men are under the ſame condition, to whoſe ſhare it falls to be born, to him it remains to die.

We are indeed diſtinguiſhed by the intervals, but equalized in the iſſue: "It is appointed to all men once to die," Heb. ix. 27. There is a ſtatute law of heaven in the caſe.

Poſſibly you think this is the worſt time for parting that could be; had you enjoyed it longer, you could have parted eaſier; but how are you deceived in that? The longer you had enjoyed it, the more loth ſtill you would have been to leave it; the deeper it would have rooted itſelf in your affection.

Had God given you ſuch a privilege as was once granted to the Engliſh parliament; that the union betwixt you and your friend ſhould not be diſſolved till you yourſelf were willing it ſhould be diſſolved; when, think you, would you have been willing it ſhould be diſſolved?

It is well for us and ours, that our times are in God's hand, and not in our own. And how immature ſoever it ſeemed to be when it was cut down; yet it "came to the grave in a "full age, as a ſhock of corn in its ſeaſon," Job v. 26. They that are in Chriſt, and in the covenant, never die unſeaſonably, whenſoever they die (ſaith † one upon the the text), 'They 'die in a good old age; yea, though they die in the ſpring and 'flower of youth; they die in a good old age; *i. e.* they are 'ripe for death whenever they die. Whenever the godly die, 'it is harveſt-time with him; though in a natural capacity he 'be cut down while he is green, and cropt in the bud or bloſ-'ſom; yet in his ſpiritual capacity, he never dies before he is

* Bear the law of neceſſity with an even mind. How many b-ſides you muſt ſorrow? *Seneca, Epiſtle* 99.

† Caryl. on the place.

'ripe; God can ripen his ſpeedily, he can let out ſuch warm 'rays and beams of his Spirit upon them, as ſhall ſoon matu-'rate the ſeeds of grace into a preparedneſs for glory.'

It was doubtleſs the moſt fit and ſeaſonable time for them that ever they could die in, and as it is a fit time for them, ſo for you alſo. Had it lived longer, it might either have engaged you more, and ſo your parting would have been harder; or elſe have puzzled and ſtumbled you more by diſcovering its natural corruption: and then what a ſtinging aggravation of your ſorrow would that have been?

Surely the Lord of time is the beſt judge of time; and in nothing do we more diſcover our folly and raſhneſs, than in preſuming to fix the times either of our comforts or troubles; as for our comforts, we never think they can come too ſoon; we would have them preſently, whether the ſeaſon be fit or not, as Numb. xii. 13. "Heal her now, Lord." O let it be done ſpeedily; we are in poſt-haſte for our comforts, and for our afflictions, we never think they come late enough; not at this time, Lord, rather at any other time than now.

But it is good to leave the timing both of the one and the other to him, whoſe works are all beautiful in their ſeaſons, and never doth any thing in an improper time.

Conſider: 7. *Call to mind in this day of trouble, the covenant you have with God, and what you ſolemnly promiſed him in the day you took him for your God.*

It will be very ſeaſonable and uſeful for thee, Chriſtian, at this time to reflect upon theſe tranſactions, and the frame of thy heart in thoſe days, when an heavier load of ſorrow preſt thy heart, now than thou feeleſt.

In thoſe your ſpiritual diſtreſſes, when the burden of ſin lay heavy, the curſe of the law, the fear of hell, the dread of death and eternity beſet thee on every ſide, and ſhut thee up to Chriſt, the only door of hope; ah! what good news wouldſt thou then have accounted it, to eſcape that danger with the loſs of all earthly comforts!

Was not this thy cry in thoſe days? 'Lord, give me Chriſt, 'and deny me whatever elſe thou pleaſeſt. Pardon my ſin, ſave 'my ſoul, and, in order to both, unite me with Chriſt, and I 'will never repine or open my mouth. Do what thou wilt 'with me; let me be friendleſs, let me be childleſs, let me be 'poor, let me be any thing rather than a chriſtleſs, graceleſs, 'hopeleſs ſoul."

And when the Lord hearkened to thy cry, and ſhewed thee mercy; when he drew thee off from the world into thy cloſet,

and there treated with thee in secret, when he was working up thy heart to the terms of his covenant, and made thee willing to accept Christ upon his own terms; O then, how heartily didst thou submit to his yoke, as most reasonable and easy, as at that time it seemed to thee?

Call to mind these days, the secret places where Christ and you made the bargain; have not these words, or words to this sense, been whispered by thee into his ear with a dropping eye, and melting heart?

'Lord Jesus, here am I, a poor guilty sinner, deeply laden 'with sin; fear and trouble upon one hand, and there is a just 'God, a severe law, and everlasting burnings, on the other 'hand: but blessed be God, O blessed be God for Jesus the Me- 'diator, who interposeth betwixt me and it. Thou art the on- 'ly door of hope at which I can escape, thy blood the only 'means of my pardon and salvation. Thou hast said, "Come 'unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden." Thou hast 'promised, that he that cometh to thee, shall in no wise be 'cast out.

'Blessed Jesus, thy poor creature cometh to thee upon these 'encouragements: I come, O but it is with many staggerings, 'with many doubts and fears of the issue; yet I am willing to 'come and make a covenant with thee this day.

'I take thee this day to be my Lord, and submit heartily to 'all thy disposals; do what thou wilt with me, or mine, let 'me be rich or poor, any thing or nothing in this world: I am 'willing to be as thou wouldst have me, and I do likewise give 'myself to thee this day, to be thine; all I am, all I have shall 'be thine, thine to serve thee, and thine to be disposed of at 'thy pleasure. Thou shalt henceforth be my highest Lord, 'my chiefest good, my last end.'

Now, Christian, make good to Christ what thou so solemnly promised him: He, I say, he hath disposed of this thy dear relation, as pleased him, and is thereby trying thy uprightness in the covenant which thou madest with him: Now where is the satisfaction and content thou promisedst to take in all his disposals? Where is that covenanted submission to his will? Didst thou except this affliction that is come upon thee?

Didst thou tell him, Lord, I will be content thou shalt, when thou pleasest, take any thing I have, save only this husband, this wife, or this dear child; I reserve this out of the bargain? I shall never endure that thou shouldst kill this comfort. If so, thou didst in all this but prove thyself an hypocrite; if thou

wast sincere in thy covenant, as Christ had no reserves on his part, so thou hadst none on thine.

It was all without any exception thou then resignedst to him, and now wilt thou go back from thy word, as one that had compromised himself, and repents the bargain? Or, at least, as one that hath forgotten these solemn transactions in the days of thy distress? Wherein hath Christ failed in one title that he promised thee? Charge him, if thou canst, with the least unfaithfulness; he hath been faithful to a title on his part, O be thou so upon thine; this day it is put to the proof, remember what thou hast promised him.

Consider. 8. *But if thy covenant with God will not quiet thee, yet methinks God's covenant with thee might be presumed to do it.*

Is thy family, which was lately hopeful, and flourishing, a peaceful tabernacle, now broken up and scattered? Thy posterity, from which thou raisedst up to thyself great expectations of comfort in old age, cut off? So that thou art now like neither to have a name, or memorial left thee in the earth.

Dost thou sit alone, and mourn to think whitherto thy hopes and comforts are now come?

Dost thou read over those words of Job, chap. xxix. ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and comment upon them with many tears; "O that I "were as in months past, as in the day when God preserved me! "when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his "light I walked through darkness! as I was in the days of my "youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, when "the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were "about me."

Yet let the covenant God hath made with thee, comfort thee in this thy desolate condition.

You know what domestic troubles holy David met with in a sad succession, not only from the death of children, but, which was much worse, from the wicked lives of his children. There was incest, murder, and rebellion in his family; a far sorer trial than death in their infancy could have been: And yet see how sweetly he relieves himself from the covenant of grace, in 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although my house be not so with "God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, "ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, "and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

I know this place principally refers to Christ, who was to spring out of David's family, according to God's covenant made with him in that behalf; and yet I doubt not but it hath

another, though less principal aspect upon his own family, over all the afflictions and troubles whereof the covenant of God with him did abundantly comfort him.

And it it comforted him, although his house did not increase, and those that were left were not such as he desired; so it may abundantly comfort you also, whatever troubles, or deaths, are upon your families, who have an interest in the covenant. For,

First, If you are God's covenant people, tho' he may afflict, yet he will never forget you. Psalm iii. 5. he is ever mindful of his covenant: You are as much upon his heart in your deepest afflictions, as in the greatest flourish of your prosperity.

You find it hard to forget your child, though it be now turned to a heap of corruption, and loathsome rottenness: O how doth your mind run upon it night and day! your thoughts tire not upon that object: Why surely it is much more easy for you to forget your dear child, whilst living, and most endearing, (much more when dead and undesirable) than it is for your God to forget you. Isa. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget "her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on "the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I "forget thee."

Can a woman, the more affectionate sex, *forget her sucking child*, her own child, and not a nursing child? Her own child, whilst it hangs on the breast, and, together with the milk from the breast, draws love from its mother's heart; can such a thing as this be in nature? possibly it may, for creature-love is fickle, and variable: But, *I will not forget thee*; it is an everlasting covenant.

Secondly, As he will never forget you in your troubles, so he will order all your troubles for your good: It is *a well ordered-covenant*, or a covenant orderly disposed; so that every thing shall work together for your good.

The covenant so orders all your trials, ranks and disposes your various troubles so, as that they shall, in their orders and places, sweetly co-operate, and join their united influences to make you happy.

Possibly you cannot see how the present affliction should be for your good; you are ready to say, with Jacob, Gen. xlii. 36. "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Ben-"jamin away; all these things are against me." But could you once see how sweetly, and orderly all these afflictions work

under the bleſſing and influence of the covenant, to your eternal good, you would not only be quiet, but thankful for that which now ſo much afflicts and troubles you.

Thirdly, This covenant is not only well ordered in all things, but *ſure*; the mercies contained in it are called, "the ſure "mercies of David," Iſa. lv. 3. Now how ſweet, how ſeaſonable a ſupport doth this conſideration give to God's afflicted under the rod! you lately made yourſelves *ſure* of that creature-comfort which hath forſaken you. It may be, you ſaid of your child, which is now gone, as Lamech ſaid of his ſon Noah, Gen. v. 29. "This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our "work, and toil of our hands." Meaning, that his ſon ſhould not only comfort them, by aſſiſting them in the work of their hands, but alſo, in enjoying the fruit of their toil and pains for him.

Probably ſuch thoughts you have had, and raiſed up to yourſelves great expectations of comfort in your old age from it; but now you ſee you built upon the ſand, and where were you now, if you had not a firmer bottom to build upon? But bleſſed be God, the covenant-mercies are more ſure, and ſolid! God, Chriſt, and heaven, never ſtarf, or fade, as theſe things do.

The ſweeteſt creature-enjoyments you ever had or have in this world, cannot ſay to you, as your God doth, "I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee." You muſt part with your dear huſbands, how well ſoever you love them; you muſt bid adieu to the wife of your boſom, how nearly ſoever your affections be linked, and heart delighted in her. Your children and you muſt be ſeparated, though they are to you as your own ſoul.

But though theſe vaniſh away, bleſſed be God there is ſomething that abides. "Though all fleſh be as graſs, and the "goodlineſs of it as the flower of the graſs, though the graſs "withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth, becauſe the Spirit "of the Lord bloweth upon it; yet the word of our God ſhall "ſtand for ever," Iſa. xl. 6, 7, 8. There is ſo much of ſupport contained in this one conſideration, that could but your faith fix here, to realize and apply it, I might lay down my pen at this period, and ſay, the work is done, there needs no more.

Conſideration 9. *The hope of the reſurrection ſhould powerfully reſtrain all exceſſes of ſorrow in thoſe that do profeſs it.*

Let them only mourn without meaſure, who mourn without hope. The huſbandman doth not mourn when he caſts his ſeed-corn into the earth, becauſe he ſows in hope; commits it to the ground with an expectation to receive it again

with improvement. Why thus ſtands the caſe here, and juſt ſo the apoſtle ſtates it, 1 Theſſ. iv. 13, 14. "But I would not "have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which "are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not even as others which have no "hope; for if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, even "ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him."

Q. d. Look not upon the dead as a loſt generation; think not that death hath annihilated, and utterly deſtroyed them: O no, they are not dead, but only aſleep; and if they ſleep, they ſhall awake again. You do not uſe to make outcries and lamentations for your children, and friends, when you find them aſleep upon their beds. Why, death is but a longer ſleep, out of which they ſhall as ſurely awake, as ever they did in the morning in this world.

I have often wondered at that golden ſentence in Seneca *, "My thoughts of the dead (ſaith he) are not as others are; I "have fair and pleaſant apprehenſions of them; for I enjoy- "ed them as one that reckoned I muſt part with them; and I "part with them as one that makes account to have them."

He ſpeaks, no doubt, of that enjoyment of them, which his pleaſant contemplations of their virtuous actions could give him; for he was wholly unacquainted with the comfortable, and heart-ſupporting doctrine of the reſurrection. Had he known the advantages which reſult thence, at what a rate may we think he would have ſpoken of the dead, and of their ſtate? But this you profeſs to believe, and yet ſink at a ſtrange rate. O ſuffer not Gentiliſm to outvie Chriſtianity; let not Pagans challenge the greateſt Believers, to out-do them in a quiet, and chearful behaviour under afflictions.

I beſeech thee, reader, if thy deceaſed friend have left thee any ſolid ground of hope that he died intereſted in Chriſt, and the covenant; that thou wilt diſtinctly ponder theſe admirable ſupports which the doctrine of the reſurrection affords.

Firſt, That the ſame body which was ſo pleaſant a ſpectacle to thee, ſhall be reſtored again; yea, the ſame *numerically*, as well as the ſame *ſpecifically*; ſo that it ſhall not only be *what* it was, but the *who* it was. "Theſe eyes ſhall behold him, "and not another," Job xix. 27. The very ſame body you laid, or are now about to lay in the grave, ſhall be reſtored again: Thou ſhalt find thine own huſband, wife, or child, or friend again; I ſay the ſelf-ſame, and not another.

* *Habui enim illos tanquam amiſſurus, amiſi tanquam habeam.* Seneca, Ep. 63.

Secondly, And farther, this is ſupporting, that as you ſhall ſee the ſame perſon that was ſo dear to you; ſo you ſhall know them to be the ſame that were once endeared to you on earth in ſo near a tie of relation.

Indeed you ſhall know them no more in any carnal relation, death diſſolved that bond: But you ſhall know them to be ſuch as once were your dear relations in this world, and be able to ſingle them out among that great multitude, and ſay, this was my father, mother, huſband, wife, or child; this was the perſon for whom I wept, and made ſupplication, who was an inſtrument of good to me, or to whoſe ſalvation God then made me inſtrumental.

For we may allow, in that ſtate, all that knowledge which is *cumulative* and *perfective*, whatſoever may enlarge and heighten our felicity and ſatisfaction, as this muſt needs be allowed to do. Luther's judgment, in this point, * being aſked by his friends at ſupper the evening before he died, replies thus, *What* (ſaith he) *befell* Adam? He never ſaw Eve, but was in a deep ſleep when God formed her; yet when he awaked, and ſaw her, he aſked not what ſhe was, nor whence ſhe came? But ſaith, ſhe was fleſh of his fleſh, and bone of his bone. Now, how knew he that? He being full of the holy Ghoſt, and endued with the knowledge of God, ſpake thus: after the ſame manner we alſo ſhall be in the other life renewed by Chriſt, and ſhall know our parents, our wives, and children.

And this, among other things, was that with which † Auguſtine comforted the lady Italica, after the death of her dear huſband, telling her that ſhe ſhould know him in the world to come, among the glorified ſaints. Yea, and a greater than either of theſe, I mean Paul, comforted himſelf, that the Theſſalonians, whom he had converted to Chriſt, ſhould be "his "joy and crown of rejoicing, in the preſence of the Lord Jeſus "Chriſt at his coming," 1 Theſſ. ii. 19, 20. which muſt needs imply his diſtinct knowledge of them in that day, which muſt be many hundred years after death hath ſeparated them from each other. Whether this knowledge ſhall be by the glorified eyes diſcerning any lineaments, or property of individuation, remaining upon the glorified bodies of our relations; or whether it ſhall be by immediate revelation, as Adam knew his wife, or as Peter, James, and John, knew Moſes and Elias in the mount; as it is difficult to determine, ſo it is needleſs to puzzle ourſelves about it.

* Melchior Adam, in the life of Luther. † Aug. Ep. 6.

It is the concurrent judgment of ſound divines, and it wants not countenance from ſcripture and reaſon, that ſuch a knowledge of them ſhall be in heaven; and then the ſadneſs of this parting will be abundantly recompenſed by the joy of that meeting. Eſpecially conſidering,

Thirdly, That at our next meeting, they ſhall be unſpeakably more deſirable, ſweet, and excellent, than ever they were in this world. They had a deſirableneſs in them here, but they were not altogether lovely, and, in every reſpect, deſirable; they had their infirmities, both natural and moral; but all theſe are removed in heaven, and for ever done away: No natural infirmities hang about glorified bodies, or ſinful ones upon perfected ſpirits of the juſt. O what lovely creatures will they appear to you then, when that which is now ſown in diſhonour, ſhall be raiſed in honour! 1 Cor. xv. 43. And then, to crown all,

Fourthly, You ſhall have an everlaſting enjoyment of them in heaven, never to part again. The children of the reſurrection can die no more, Luke xx. 36. you ſhall kiſs their pale lips, and cold cheeks, no more; you ſhall never fear another parting pull, but be together with the Lord for ever, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. And this the apoſtle thought an effectual cordial in this caſe when he exhorted the Theſſalonians to "comfort one "another with theſe words."

Conſid. 10. *The preſent felicity into which all that die in Chriſt are preſently admitted, ſhould abundantly comfort Chriſtians over the death of ſuch as either carried a lively hope out of the world with them, or have left good grounds of ſuch an hope behind them.*

Such there are, that carried a lively hope to heaven with them, who could evidence to themſelves and friends, their intereſt in Chriſt, and in the covenant: Yea, though they had died in ſilence, yet their converſations would ſpeak for them, and the tenor of their lives leave no ground of doubting touching their death. Others dying in their infancy and youth, though they carried not ſuch an actual hope with them, yet they have left good grounds of hope behind them.

Parents, now ponder theſe grounds; you have prayed for them, you have many times wreſtled with the Lord on their behalf; you have taken hold of God's covenant for them, as well as for yourſelves, and dedicated them to the Lord; and they have not, by any actions of theirs, deſtroyed thoſe grounds of your hope, but that you may with much probability, conclude, they are with God.

Why, if the caſe be ſo, what abundant reaſon have you to be quiet, and well ſatisfied with what God hath done? Can they be better than where they are? Had you better proviſions and entertainment for them here, than their heavenly Father hath above?

There is no Chriſtian parent in the world, but would rejoice to ſee his child out-ſtrip and get before him in grace, that he may be more eminent in parts and ſervice, than ever he was: And what reaſon can be given, why we ſhould not as much rejoice to ſee our children get before us in glory, as in grace? They are gotten to heaven a few years before you, and is that matter of mourning? Would not your child (if he were not ignorant of you) ſay, as Chriſt did to his friends, a little before his death, when he ſaw them caſt down at the thoughts of parting, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, be-"cauſe I go unto the Father." *Q. d.* Do you value your own ſenſible comfort, from my bodily preſence with you, before my glory and advancement in heaven? Is this love to me? Or is it not rather ſelf-love?

So would your departed friend ſay to you: 'You have pro-'feſſed much love all along to me, my happineſs ſeemed to be 'very dear to you. How comes it to paſs, then, that you 'mourn ſo exceedingly now? This is rather the effect of a 'fond and fleſhly, than of a rational and ſpiritual love; if 'you loved me with a pure ſpiritual love, ye would rejoice 'that I am gone to my Father. It is infinitely better for me 'to be here, than with you on earth, under ſin and ſorrow. 'Weep not for me, but for yourſelves.'

Alas! though you want your friend's company, he wants not yours; your care was to provide for this child, but Jeſus Chriſt hath provided infinitely better for it than you could; you intended an eſtate, but he a kingdom for it; you thought upon ſuch or ſuch a match, but Chriſt hath forbid all others, and married your child to himſelf. Would you imagine a higher preferment for the fruit of your bodies?

A King from heaven hath ſent for your friend, and do you grudge at the journey? O think, and think again, what an honour it is to you, that Chriſt hath taken them out of your boſom, and laid them in his own; ſtript them out of thoſe garments you provided, and cloathed them in white robes, waſhed in the blood of the Lamb. Let not your hearts be troubled, rather rejoice exceedingly, that God made you inſtruments to repleniſh heaven, and bring forth an heir for the kingdom of God.

Your child is now glorifying God, in an higher way than you can, and what though you have loſt its bodily preſence for a time; yet, I hope, you do not reckon that to be your loſs, which turns to God's greater glory.

When Jacob heard his Joſeph was lord of Egypt, he rather wiſhed himſelf with Joſeph, than his Joſeph with him in wants and ſtraits; ſo ſhould it be with you: You are yet rolling, and toſſing upon a tempeſtuous ſea, but your friend is gone into the quiet harbour; deſire rather to be there, than that he were at ſea with you again.

Conſideration 11. *Conſider how vain a thing all your troubles, and ſelf-vexation is; it no way betters your caſe, nor eaſes your burden.*

As a bullock, by wreſtling and ſweating in the furrow, makes his yoke to be more heavy, and galls his neck, and ſpends his ſtrength the ſooner, and no ways helps himſelf by that: Why thus ſtands the caſe with thee; if thou be as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke, what Chriſt ſaith of *caring*, we may ſay of *grieving*, (Matth. vi. 27.) "Which of you, by taking "thought, can add one cubit to his ſtature?"

Cares may break our ſleep, yea, break our hearts, but they cannot add to our ſtature, either in a natural, or in a civil notion: So our ſorrowing may ſooner break our hearts, than the yoke God hath laid on you.

Alas! what is all this, but as the fluttering of a bird in the net, which, inſtead of freeing, doth but the more entangle itſelf. It was therefore a wiſe reſolution of David, in this very caſe, when the will of God was ſignified in the death of his child, 2 Sam. xii. 23. "But now he is dead, wherefore ſhould "I faſt? Can I bring him back again? I ſhall go to him, but "he ſhall not return to me."

Can I bring him back again? No; I can no more alter the purpoſe, and work of God, than I can change the ſeaſons of the year, or alter the courſe of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, or diſturb the order of the day and night; which are all unalterably eſtabliſhed by a firm conſtitution, and ordinance of heaven.

As theſe ſeaſons cannot be changed by man, ſo neither can this courſe and way of his providences be changed. Job xxiii. 13. "He is of one mind, and who can turn him? And what "his ſoul deſireth, even that he doth." Indeed, while his pleaſure and purpoſe are unknown to us, there is room for faſting and prayer, to prevent the thing we fear: But when the

purpose of God is manifested in the issue, and the stroke is given, then it is the vainest thing in the world to fret, and vex ourselves, as David's servants thought he would do, as soon as he should hear the child was dead: But he was wiser than so, his tears and cries to God before, had the nature and use of means to prevent the affliction; but when it was come, and could not be prevented, then they were of no use, to no purpose in the world; "Wherefore should I fast?" *Q. d.* To what end, use, or purpose, will it be now?

Well, then, cast not away your strength and spirits, to no advantage; reserve them for future exercises and trials: Time may come, that you may need all the strength you have, and much more, to support greater burdens than this.

Consideration 12. *The Lord is able to restore all your lost comforts in relations, double to you, if you meekly submit to him, and patiently wait upon him under the rod.*

When Esau had lost his blessing, he said, "Hast thou but "one blessing, my Father?" Gen. xxvii. 38. But your Father hath more blessings for you than one; his name is the "Father "of mercies," 2 Cor. xiii. 11. He can beget, and create, as many mercies for you as he pleaseth; relations, and the comforts of them, are at his command.

It is but a few months, or years past, and these comforts, whose loss you now lament, were not in being; nor did you know whence they should arise to you, yet the Lord gave the word, and commanded them for you; and, if he please, he can make the death of these but like a scythe to the meadow that is mown down, or a razor to the head that is shaved bare; which, though it lay you under the present trouble and reproach of barrenness, yet doth but make way for a double increase, a second spring, with advantage.

So that even as it was with the captive church, in respect of her special children, in the day of her captivity and reproach, the Lord made up all with advantage to her, even to her own astonishment. Isa. xlii. 20. "The children which thou shalt "have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine "ears, the place is too strait for me: Give place to me that I "may dwell."

Thus may he deal with you, as to your natural children, and relations; so that what the man of God said to Amaziah, 1 Chron. xxv. 9. may be applied to the case in hand. "Ama-"ziah said to the man of God, but what shall we do for the "hundred talents? And the man of God answered, the Lord "is able to give thee much more than this."

O ſay not, What ſhall I do for friends and relations? Death hath robbed me of all comfort in them. Why, the Lord is able to give you much more. But then, as ever you expect to ſee your future bleſſings multiplied, look to it, and be careful that you neither diſhonour God, nor grieve him, by your unſubmiſſive, and impatient carriage, under the preſent rod.

God took away all Job's children, and that at one ſtroke, and the ſtroke immediate and extraordinary, and that when they were grown up, and planted (at leaſt ſome of them) in diſtinct families; yea, whilſt they were indearing each other by mutual expreſſions of affection. This muſt be yielded to be an extraordinary trial, yet he meekly receives, and patiently bears it from the hand of the Lord.

You have heard of the patience of Job, (ſaith the apoſtle, James v. 11.) "and ſeen the end of the Lord." Not only the gracious end, or intention of the Lord in all his afflictions, but the happy end and iſſue the Lord gave to all his afflictions, of which you have the account, Job xlii. 10. "The Lord gave "Job twice as much as he had before." The number of his children was not double to what he had, as all his other comforts were; But though the Lord only reſtored the ſame number to him again that he took away, yet it is likely the comfort he had in theſe latter children was double to what he had in the former. There is nothing loſt by waiting patiently, and ſubmitting willingly to the Lord's diſpoſe.

It is as eaſy with the Lord to revive, as it is to remove your comforts in relations. There is a ſweet expreſſion to this purpoſe, in Pſal. lxxxi. 28. "For thou, Lord, will light my candle, "the Lord my God will enlighten my darkneſs."

Every comfortable enjoyment, whether it be in relations, eſtate, health, or friends, is a candle lighted by providence for our comfort in this world, and they are but candles, which will not always laſt; and thoſe that laſt longeſt will be conſumed and waſted at laſt; but oftentimes it falls out with them as with candles, they are blown out before they are half conſumed; yea, almoſt as ſoon as lighted up, and then we are in darkneſs for the preſent.

It is a dark hour with us, when theſe comforts are put out; but David's faith did, and ours may comfort us with this, that he that blew out the candle, can light up another: "Thou, "Lord, ſhalt light my candle, the Lord my God ſhall enlighten my darkneſs." That is, the Lord will renew my comforts, alter the preſent ſad eſtate I am in, and chaſe away that trouble and darkneſs which at preſent lies upon me: Only be

ware of offending him, at whoſe beck your lights and comforts come and go. Michal diſpleaſed the Lord, and therefore had no child unto the day of her death, 2 Sam. vi. 23.

Hannah waited humbly upon the Lord for the bleſſing of children, and the Lord remembered her; he enlightened her condition with that comfort, when ſhe was as a lamp deſpiſed. There is no comfort you have loſt but God can reſtore it, yea, double it in kind, if he ſees it convenient for you. And if not, then,

Conſideration 13. *Conſider, though he ſhould deny you any more comforts of that kind, yet he hath far better to beſtow upon you, ſuch as theſe deſerve not to be named with.*

You have an excellent Scripture to this purpoſe, in Iſa. lvi. 4, 5. "For thus ſaith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my "ſabbaths; and chuſe the things that pleaſe me, and take hold "of my covenant; even to them will I give in my houſe, and "within my walls, a place, and a name better than of ſons and "daughters; I will give them an everlaſting name, that "ſhall not be cut off."

See Engliſh Annotations on the place.

Mens names are to be continued in their iſſue, in their male iſſue eſpecially, and conſequently to fail in ſuch as wanted iſſue, Num. xvii. 4. and a numerous iſſue is deemed no ſmall honour, Pſal. cxxvii. 4, 5. God therefore promiſed here to ſupply, and make good the want of iſſue, and whatſoever, either honour here, or memorial hereafter, might from it have accrued to them, by beſtowing upon them matter of far greater honour, and more durable; a name better, or before the names of ſons or daughters.

It is a greater honour to be the child of God, than to have the greateſt honour, or comfort, that ever children afforded their parents in this world.

Poor heart, thou art now dejected by this affliction that lies upon thee, as if all joy and comfort were now cut off from thee in this world.

A cloud dwells upon all other comforts, this affliction hath ſo imbittered thy ſoul, that thou taſteſt no more in any other earthly comforts, than in the white of an egg. O that thou didſt but conſider the conſolations that are with God for ſuch as anſwer his ends in affliction, and patiently wait on him for their comfort! he hath comforts for you far tranſcending the joy of children.

This ſome have found when their children have been cut off from them, and that in ſo eminent a degree, that they have

little valued their comfort in children, in compariſon with this comfort.

I will therefore ſet down a pregnant inſtance of the point in hand, as I find it recorded by the grave and worthy author of that excellent book, intituled, *The fulfilling of the ſcripture.* *Fulfilling of the ſcripture, p.* 491.

Another notable inſtance of grace, with a very remarkable paſſage in his condition, I ſhall here mention. 'One Patrick Mackewrath, who lived in the weſt parts 'of Scotland, whoſe heart, in a remarkable way, the Lord 'touched, and after his converſion (as he ſhewed to many 'Chriſtian friends) was in ſuch a frame, ſo affected with a new 'world, wherein he was entered, the diſcoveries of God, and 'of a life to come; that for ſome months together he did ſel-'dom ſleep, but was ſtill taken up in wondering. His life was 'very remarkable for tenderneſs, and near converſe with God 'in his walk; and, which was worthy to be noted, one day, 'after a ſharp trial, having his only ſon ſuddenly taken away 'by death, he retired alone for ſeveral hours, and when he 'came forth did look ſo chearfully, that to thoſe who aſked 'him the reaſon thereof, and wondered at the ſame in ſuch a 'time; he told them, He had got that in his retirement with 'the Lord, that to have it afterwards renewed, he would be 'content to loſe a ſon every day.'

O what a ſweet exchange had he made! Surely he had gold for braſs, a pearl for a pebble, a treaſure for a trifle; for ſo great, yea, and far greater is the diſproportion betwixt the ſweet light of God's countenance, and the faint, dim light of the beſt creature-enjoyment.

Would it pleaſe the Lord to make this ſun ariſe and ſhine upon you, now when the ſtars that ſhined with a dim and borrowed light are gone down, you would ſee ſuch gain by the exchange, as would quickly make you caſt in your votes with him we now mentioned, and ſay, Lord, let every day be ſuch as this funeral day; let all my hours be as this, ſo that I may ſee and taſte what I now do. How gladly would I part with the deareſt, and neareſt creature-comfort I own in this world. The gracious and tender Lord hath his divine cordials reſerved on purpoſe for ſuch ſad hours; theſe are ſometimes given before ſome ſharp trial, to prepare for it, and ſometimes after, to ſupport under it.

I have often heard it from the mouth, and found it in the *diary* of a ſweet Chriſtian now with God, that a little before the Lord removed her dear huſband by death, there was ſuch an a-

bundant outlet of the love of God unto her ſoul, for ſeveral days and nights following, that when the Lord took away her husband by death, though he was a gracious and ſweet tempered (and by her moſt tenderly beloved) huſband; ſhe was ſcarce ſenſible of the ſtroke, but carried quite above all earthly things, their comforts, and their troubles: ſo that ſhe had almoſt loſt the thoughts of her dear huſband in God. And had not the Lord taken this courſe with her, ſhe concluded that blow had not been poſſible to be borne by her, ſhe muſt have ſunk without ſuch a preparative.

A huſband, a wife, a child, are great, very great things, as they ſtand by other creatures; but ſurely they will ſeem little things, and next to nothing, when the Lord ſhall ſet himſelf by them before the ſoul.

And how know you, but God hath bidden theſe earthly comforts ſtand aſide this day, to make way for heavenly ones? It may be, God is coming to communicate himſelf more ſweetly, more ſenſibly than ever to your ſouls; and theſe are the providences which muſt caſt up, and prepare the way of the Lord. Poſſibly God's meaning in their death is but this; child, ſtand aſide, thou art in my way, and filleſt my place in thy parent's heart.

Conſideration 14. *Be careful you exceed not in your grief for the loſs of earthly things, conſidering that Satan takes the advantage of all extremes.*

You cannot touch any extreme, but you will be touched by that enemy, whoſe greateſt advantages lie in aſſaulting you here.

Satan is called, *The ruler of the darkneſs of this world*, Eph. vi. 12. (*i. e.*) his kingdom is ſupported by darkneſs. Now, there is a twofold darkneſs, which gives Satan great advantage; the darkneſs of the *mind*, *viz.* ignorance; and the darkneſs of the *condition*, *viz.* trouble and affliction. Of the former the apoſtle ſpeaks chiefly in that text; but the latter alſo is by him often improved, to carry on his deſigns upon us. When it is a dark hour of trouble with us, then is his fitteſt ſeaſon to tempt.

That cowardly ſpirit falls upon the people of God, when they are down and low in ſpirit, as well as ſtate. Satan would never have deſired that the hand of God ſhould have been ſtretched out upon Job's perſon, eſtate, and children, but that he promiſed himſelf a notable advantage therein, to poiſon his ſpirit with vile thoughts of God. "Do this (ſaith he) and "he will curſe thee to thy face."

What the Pſalmiſt obſerves of *natural*, is as true of *metaphorical* darkneſs, Pſal. civ. 20. "Thou makeſt darkneſs, and "it is night, wherein all the beaſts of the foreſt do creep forth, "the young lions roar after their prey."

When it is dark night with men, it is noon-day with Satan; *i. e.* our ſuffering time is his buſieſt working-time; many a diſmal ſuggeſtion he then plants, and grafts upon your affliction, which are much more dangerous to us than the affliction itſelf.

Sometimes he injects *deſponding* thoughts into the afflicted ſoul; "Then ſaid I, I am cut off from before thine eyes," Pſal. xxxi. 22. and Lam. iii. 18, 19. "My hope is periſhed from "the Lord, remembring my affliction, and my miſery, the "wormwood and the gall."

Sometimes he ſuggeſts *hard* thoughts of God. Ruth i. 20. "The Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me." Yea, that he hath dealt more ſeverely with us, than any other, Lam. i. 12. "See and behold, if there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow, "which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted "me in the day of his fierce anger."

And ſometimes murmuring and repining thoughts againſt the Lord; the ſoul is diſpleaſed at the hand of God upon it. Jonah was angry at the hand of God, and ſaid, "I do well to "be angry, even unto death," Jonah iv. 9. What diſmal thoughts are theſe? and how much more afflictive to a gracious ſoul, than the loſs of any outward enjoyment in this world.

And ſometimes very *irreligious*, and *atheiſtical* thoughts, as if there were no privilege to be had by religion, and all our pains, zeal, and care about duty, were little better than loſt labour, Pſal. lxxiii. 13, 14. "Verily I have cleanſed my heart "in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency; for all the day "long I have been plagued, and chaſtened every morning."

By theſe things Satan gets no ſmall advantage upon the afflicted Chriſtian; for albeit theſe thoughts are his burden, and God will not impute them to the condemnation of his people; yet they rob the ſoul of peace, and hinder it from duty, and make it act uncomely under affliction, to the ſtumbling and hardening of others in their ſin: beware therefore, leſt by your exceſſes of ſorrow ye give place to the devil; we are not ignorant of his devices.

Conſideration 15. *Give no way to exceſſive ſorrows upon the account of affliction, if ye have any regard to the honour of God, and religion, which will hereby be expoſed to reproach.*

If you ſlight your own honour, do not ſlight the honour of

God, and religion too; take heed how you carry it in a day of trouble; many eyes are upon you. It is a true obſervation that a late worthy * author hath made upon this caſe: 'What will 'the Atheiſt, and what will the profane ſcoffer ſay, when 'they ſhall ſee this? So ſottiſh and malicious they are, that if 'they do but ſee you in affliction, they are ſtraightway ſcornfully demanding, Where is your God?

'But what would they ſay, if they ſhould hear you yourſelves 'unbelievingly cry out, Where is our God? Will they not 'be ready to cry, this is the religion they make ſuch boaſt of, 'which you ſee how little it does for them in a day of extremity: they talk of promiſes, rich and precious promiſes; but 'where are they now? Or to what purpoſe do they ſerve? 'They ſaid they had a treaſure in heaven; what ails them to 'mourn ſo, then, if their riches are there?'

O beware what you do before the world; they have eyes to ſee what you can do, as well as ears to hear what you can ſay: and as long as your carriage under trouble is ſo much like their own, they will never think your principles are better than theirs. Carnal worldlings will be drawn to think, that whatever fine talk you might have about God, and heaven, your hearts were moſt upon the ſame things that theirs were, ſince your grief for their removal is as great as theirs.

They know by experience what a ſtay it is to the heart, to have an able, faithful friend to depend upon, or to have hopes of a great eſtate ſhortly to fall to them; and they will never be perſuaded you have any ſuch ground of comfort, if they ſee you as much caſt down as they that pretend to no ſuch matter.

By this means the precepts of Chriſt to conſtancy and contentment in all eſtates, will come to be looked upon (like thoſe of the *ſtoics*) only as *magnifica verba*, brave words; but ſuch as are impoſſible to be practiſed; and the whole of the goſpel will be taken for an airy notion, ſince they that profeſs greateſt regard to it, are no more helped thereby.

O what a ſhame is it that religion ſhould, in this caſe, make no more difference betwixt man and man! wherefore ſhew to the world (whatever their common cenſures are) that it is not ſo much your care to differ from them in ſome opinions, and a little ſtrictneſs, as in humility, meekneſs, contempt of the world, and heavenly-mindedneſs; and now let theſe graces diſplay themſelves by your chearful, patient deportment under all your grievances.

* *M. M. his appendix to Solomon's preſcription, p.* 122.

Wherefore hath God planted thoſe excellent graces in your ſouls? but that he might be glorified, and you benefited by the exerciſes of them in tribulation: ſhould theſe be ſuppreſſed and hid, and nothing but the pride, paſſion, and unmortified earthlineſs of your hearts ſet on work, and diſcovered in time of trouble, what a ſlur, what a wound will you give to the glorious name which is called upon by you? And then if your hearts be truly gracious, that will pierce you deeper than ever your affliction, which occaſioned it, did.

I beſeech you, therefore, be tender of the name of God, if you will not be ſo of your own peace and comfort.

Conſid. 16. *Be quiet, and hold your peace, you little know how many mercies lie in the womb of this affliction.*

Great are the benefits of a ſharp, rouzing affliction to the people of God at ſometimes, and all might have them at all times, were they more careful to improve them. Holy David thankfully acknowledgeth, Pſal. cxix. 71. "It is good for me "that I have been afflicted."

And ſurely there is as much good in them for you, as for him; if the Lord ſanctify them to ſuch ends, and uſes, as his were ſanctified unto.

Such a ſmarting rod as this, came not before there was need enough of it, and poſſibly you ſaw the need of ſome awakening providence yourſelves; but if not, the Lord did: he took not up the rod to ſmite you, till his faithfulneſs, and tender love to your ſouls, called upon him to correct you.

You now ſit penſive under the rod, ſadly lamenting and deploring the loſs of ſome earthly comfort; your heart is ſurcharged with ſorrow, your eyes run down upon every mention, and remembrance of your dear friend: why, if there were no more, this alone may diſcover the need you had of this rod; for doth not all this ſorrow at parting plainly ſpeak how much your heart was ſet upon, how faſt your heart was glewed to this earthly comfort?

Now you ſee that your affections were ſunk many degrees deeper into the creature, than you are aware of: and what ſhould God do in this caſe by you? Should he ſuffer you to cleave to the creature, more and more? Should he permit it to purloin, and exhauſt your love and delight, and ſteal away your heart from himſelf? This he could not do, and love you. The more impatient you are, under this affliction, the more need you had of it.

And what if by this ſtroke the Lord will awaken your drowzy

soul, and recover you out of that pleasant, but dangerous spiritual slumber you were fallen into, whilst you had pillowed your head upon this pleasant, sensible creature-enjoyment? Is not this really better for you, than if he should say, Sleep on: he is joined to idols, let him alone; he is departing from me, the fountain, to a broken cistern; let him go.

Yea, what if by this stroke upon one of the pleasantest things you had in this world, God will discover to you, more sensibly and effectually than ever, the vanity both of that and all earthly comforts, so as that you shall from henceforth never let love your heart, your hope, your love, and delight to any of them, as you did before? You could talk before of the creatures vanity, but I question whether ever you had so clear, and convincing a sight of its vanity, as you have this day: and is not this a considerable mercy in your eyes?

Now, if ever God is weaning you from all fond opinion, and vain expectations from this world; by this your *judgment* of the creatures is *rectified*, and your *affections* to all other enjoyments on earth *moderated*: and is this nothing? O doubtless it is a greater mercy to you, than to have your friend alive again.

And what if by this rod your wandering, gadding heart shall be whipped home to God? your neglected duties revived? your decayed communion with God restored? a spiritual, heavenly frame of heart recovered? What will you say then?

Surely you will bless that merciful hand which removed the obstructions, and adore the Divine wisdom, and goodness, that by such a device as this recovered you to himself. Now you can pray more constantly, more spiritually, more affectionately than before. O blessed rod, which buds and blossoms with such fruits as these! Let this be written among your best mercies, for you shall have cause to adore and bless God eternally for this beneficial affliction.

Consideration 17. *Suffer not yourselves to be transported by impatience, and swallowed up of grief, because God hath exercised you under a smart rod; for, as smarting as it is, it is comparatively a gentle stroke to what others, as good as yourselves, have felt.*

Your dear relation is dead; be it so, here is but a single death before you, but others have seen many deaths contrived into one upon their relations, to which yours is nothing.

Zedekiah saw his children murdered before his eyes, and then had those eyes (alas! too late) put out.

The fulfilling The worthy author of that excellent book be-

fore-mentioned, tells us of a choice, and godly gentlewoman in the north of Ireland, who, when the rebellion broke out there, fled with three children, one of them upon the breast; they had not gone far before they were stripped naked by the Irish, who, to their admiration, spared their lives, (it is like, concluding that cold and hunger would kill them) afterwards going on at the foot of a river which runs to Lecheach, others met them, and would have cast them into the river; but this godly woman, not dismayed, asked a little liberty to pray, and as she lay naked on the frozen ground, got resolution not to go on her own feet, to so unjust a death, upon which having called her, and she refusing, was dragged by the heels along that rugged way, to be cast in with her little ones, and company. *of the Scriptures.*

But she then turned, and on her knees says, You should, I am sure, be Christians, and men I see you are; in taking away our miserable lives, you do us a pleasure; but know, that as we never wronged you nor yours, you must remember to die also yourselves, and one day give an account of this cruelty, to the Judge of heaven and earth. Hereupon they resolved not to murder them with their own hands, but turned them all naked upon a small island in the river, without any provision, there to perish.

The next day, the two boys having crept aside, found the hide of a beast which had been killed, at the root of a tree, which the mother cast over them lying upon the snow. The next day a little boat goes by, unto whom she calls for God's sake to take them in, but they being Irish, refused; she desired a little bread, but they said they had none; then she begs a coal of fire, which she obtained; and thus, with some fallen chips, made a little fire, and the children taking a piece of the hide laid it on the coals, and began to gnaw the leather; but without an extraordinary Divine support, what could this do?

Thus they lived ten days, without any visible means of help, having no bread, but ice and snow, nor drink, except water. The two boys being near starved, she pressed them to go out of her sight, not being able to see their death; yet God delivered them as miraculously at last, as he had supported them all that while.

But judge whether a natural death, in an ordinary way be comparable to such a trial as this; and yet thus the Lord did by this choice and eminently gracious woman.

And Mr. Wall, in his *None-but-Christ*, relates as sad a pas-

ſage of a poor family in Germany, who were driven unto that extremity in the famine, that at laſt the parents made a motion one to the other to ſell one of the children for bread to ſuſtain themſelves, and the reſt; but when they came to conſider which child it ſhould be, their hearts ſo relented, and yerned upon every one, that they reſolved rather all to die together. Yea, we read in Lam. iv. 10. "The hands of the pitiful wo-"men have ſodden their own children."

But why ſpeak I of theſe extremities? How many parents, yea, ſome godly ones too, have lived to ſee their children dying in prophaneneſs, and ſome by the hand of juſtice, lamenting their rebellions with a rope about their necks.

Ah! reader, little doſt thou know what ſtings there are in the afflictions of others! ſurely you have no reaſon to think the Lord hath dealt more bitterly with you than any. It is a gentle ſtroke, a merciful diſpenſation, if you compare it with what others have felt.

Conſideration 18. *If God be your God, you have really loſt nothing by the removal of any creature-comfort.*

God is the fountain of all true comfort; creatures, the very beſt and ſweeteſt, are but ciſterns to receive, and convey to us what comfort God is pleaſed to communicate to them; and if the ciſtern be broken, or the pipe cut off, ſo that no more comfort can be conveyed to us that way, he hath other ways and mediums to do it by, which we think not of; and if he pleaſe he can convey his comforts to his people without any of them: And if he do it more immediately, we ſhall be no loſers by that; for no comforts in the world are ſo delectable, and raviſhingly ſweet, as thoſe that flow immediately from the fountain.

And it is the ſenſuality of our hearts that cauſes us to affect them ſo inordinately, and grieve for the loſs of them ſo immoderately, as if we had not enough in God, without theſe creature-ſupplements.

Is the fulneſs of the fountain yours? And yet do you caſt down yourſelves, becauſe the broken ciſtern is removed? The beſt creatures are no better, Jer. ii. 13. Ciſterns have nothing but what they receive, and broken ones cannot hold what is put into them. Why then do you mourn, as if your life were bound up in the creature? You have as free an acceſs to the fountain as you had before. It is the advice of an Heathen, (and let them take the comfort of it) to repair, by a new earthly comfort, what we have loſt in the former.

"Thou haſt carried forth him whom thou lovedſt, (ſaith * "Seneca) ſeek one whom thou mayeſt love in his ſtead: It is "better to repair, than to bemoan thy loſs."

But if God never repair your loſs, in things of the ſame kind, you know he can abundantly repair it in himſelf.

Ah! Chriſtian, is not one kiſs of his mouth, one glimpſe of his countenance, one ſeal of his Spirit, a more ſweet and ſubſtantial comfort, than the ſweeteſt relation in this world can afford you? If the ſtream fail, repair to the fountain, there is enough ſtill; God is where he was, and what he was, though the creature be not.

Conſideration 19. *Though you may want a little comfort in your life, yet ſurely it may be recompenſed to you by a more eaſy death.*

The removal of your friends before you, may turn to your great advantage, when your hour is come that you muſt follow them. O how have many good ſouls been clogged, and enſnared, in their dying hour, by the loves, cares, and fears they have had about thoſe they muſt leave behind them in a ſinful, evil world!

Your love to them might have proved a ſnare to you, and cauſed you to hang back, as loath to go hence; for theſe are the things that make men loath to die. And thus it might have been with you, except God had removed them beforehand, or ſhould give you in that day ſuch ſights of heaven, and taſtes of divine love, as ſhould maſter, and mortify all your earthly affections to theſe things.

I knew a gracious perſon, now in heaven, who for many weeks in her laſt ſickneſs, complained that ſhe found it hard to part with a dear relation, and that there was nothing proved a greater clog to her ſoul, than this: It is much more eaſy to think of going to our friends, who are in heaven before us, than of parting with them, and leaving our deſirable and dear ones behind us.

And who knows what cares, and diſtracting thoughts you may then be peſtered and diſtracted with, upon their account? What ſhall become of theſe, when I am gone? I am now to leave them, God knows to what wants, miſeries, temptations, and afflictions in the midſt of a deceitful, defiling, dangerous world.

I know it is our duty to leave our fatherleſs children, and

* *Quem amabas extuliſti, quære quem ames: Satius eſt amicum reparare quam flere.* Senec. Epiſt. p. 637.

friendleſs relations, with God; to truſt them with him that gave them to us: And ſome have been enabled chearfully to do ſo when they were parting from them. * Luther could ſay, 'Lord, thou haſt given me a wife and children, I have little to 'leave them; nouriſh, teach, and keep them; O thou Father 'of the fatherleſs, and Judge of the widow.' But every Chriſtian hath not a Luther's faith; ſome find it a hard thing to diſentangle their affections at ſuch a time: But now, if God has ſent all yours before you, you have ſo much the leſs to do; death may be eaſier to you than others.

Conſideration 20. *But if nothing that hath been yet ſaid will ſtick with you, then, laſtly, remember that you are near that ſtate, and place, which admits no ſorrows, nor ſad reflections, upon any ſuch accounts as theſe.*

Yet a little while, and you ſhall not miſs them, you ſhall not need them, but you ſhall live as the angels of God: We now live partly by faith, partly by ſenſe, partly upon God, and partly upon the creature; our ſtate is mixed, therefore our comforts are ſo too. But when God ſhall be all in all, and we ſhall be as the angels of God in the way and manner of our living; how much will the caſe be altered with us then, from what it is now?

Angels neither marry, nor are given in marriage, neither ſhall the children of the reſurrection; when the days of our ſinning are ended, the days of our mourning ſhall be ſo too. No graves were opened till ſin entered, and no more ſhall be opened when ſin is excluded.

Our glorified relations ſhall live with us for ever; they ſhall complain no more, die no more; yea, this is the happineſs of that ſtate to which you are paſſing on, that your ſouls being in the neareſt conjunction with God, the fountain of joy, you ſhall have no concernment out of him. You ſhall not be put upon theſe exerciſes of patience, nor ſubjected to ſuch ſorrows as you now feel, any more. It is but a little while, and the end of all theſe things will come. O therefore bear up, as perſons that expect ſuch a day of jubilee at hand.

And thus I have finiſhed the ſecond general head of this diſcourſe, which is a diſſuaſive from the ſin of immoderate ſorrow.

3. I now proceed to the third thing propoſed, namely, to remove the pleas and excuſes for this immoderate grief. It is natural to men, yea, to good men, to juſtify their exceſſes, or at leaſt to extenuate them, by pleading for their paſſions,

* Melchior Adam, in the life of Luther.

is if they wanted not cauſe, and reaſon enough to excuſe them. If theſe be fully anſwered, and the ſoul once convinced, and left without apology for its ſin, it is then in a fair way for its cure, which is the laſt thing deſigned in this treatiſe.

My preſent buſineſs, therefore, is, to ſatisfy thoſe objections, and anſwer thoſe reaſons which are commonly pleaded in this caſe, to juſtify our exceſſive grief for loſt relations. And tho' I ſhall carry it in that line of relation to which the text directs, yet it is equally applicable to all others.

Plea 1. You preſs me, by many great conſiderations to meekneſs, and quiet ſubmiſſion under this heavy ſtroke of God; but you little know what ſtings my ſoul feels now in it.

This child was a child of many prayers, it was a Samuel begged of the Lord, and I concluded, when I had it, that it brought with it the returns, and anſwers of many prayers. But now I ſee it was nothing leſs; God had no regard to my prayer about it, nor was it given me in that ſpecial way of mercy, as I imagined it to be: My child is not only dead, but my prayers in the ſame day ſhut out, and denied.

Anſwer 1. That you prayed for your children before you had them, was your duty; and if you prayed not for them ſubmiſſively, referring it to the pleaſure of God to give, or deny them, to continue, or remove them, as ſhould ſeem good to him, that was your ſin: You ought not to limit the Holy One of Iſrael, not preſcribe to him, or capitulate with him, for what term you ſhall enjoy your outward comforts: If you did ſo, it was your evil, and God hath juſtly rebuked it by this ſtroke. If you did pray conditionally, and ſubmiſſively, referring both the mercy asked, and continuance of it to the will of God, as you ought to do; then there is nothing in the death of your child, that croſſes the true ſcope and intent in your prayer.

Anſwer 2. Your prayers may be anſwered, though the thing prayed for be with-held, yea, or though it ſhould be given for a little while, and ſnatched away from you again. There are four ways of God's anſwering prayers; by giving the thing prayed for preſently, Dan. ix 23. or by ſuſpending the anſwer for a time, and giving it afterwards, Luke xviii. 7. or by withholding from you that mercy which you ask. and giving you a much better mercy in the room of it, Deut. iii. 24. compared with Deut. xxxiv. 4, 5. Or, laſtly, by giving you patience to bear the loſs, or want of it, 2 Cor xii. 9.

Now, if the Lord have taken away your child, or friend, and

in lieu thereof given you a meek, quiet, ſubmiſſive heart to his will, you need not ſay he hath ſhut out your cry.

Plea 2. But I have loſt a lovely, obliging, and moſt endearing child, one that was beautiful, and ſweet; it is a ſtony heart that would not diſſolve into tears for the loſs of one ſo deſireable, ſo engaging as this was: Ah! it is no common loſs.

Anſwer 1. The more lovely, and engaging, your relation was, the more excellent will your patience, and contentment with the will of God, in its death, be; the more lovelineſs, the more ſelf-denial, the more grace. Had it been a thouſand times more endearingly ſweet than it was, it was not too good to deny for God. If therefore obedience to the will of God do indeed maſter natural affections, and that you look upon patience and contentment as much more beautiful than the ſweeteſt, and moſt deſireable enjoyment on earth, it may turn to you for a teſtimony of the truth and ſtrength of grace: that you can, like Abraham, part with a child whom you ſo dearly love, in obedience to the will of your God, whom you love infinitely more.

Anſwer 2. The lovelineſs and beauty of our children, and relations, though it muſt be acknowledged a good gift from the hand of God; yet it is but a common gift, and oftentimes becomes a ſnare, and is, in its own nature, but a tranſitory, vaniſhing thing, and therefore no ſuch great aggravation of the loſs as is pretended.

I ſay, it is but a common gift; Eliab, Adonijah, and Abſalom, had as lovely preſences as any in their generation. Yea, it is not only common to the wicked, with the godly, but to brute animals, as well as men, and to moſt that excel in it, it becomes a temptation; the ſouls of ſome had been more beautiful and lovely, if their bodies had been leſs ſo. Beſides, it is but a flower which nouriſhes in its mouth, and then fades. This therefore ſhould not be reflected on as ſo great a circumſtance to aggravate your trouble.

Anſwer 3. But if your relation ſleep in Jeſus, he will appear ten thouſand times more lovely in the morning of the reſurrection, than ever he was in the world. What is the exacteſt, pureſt beauty of mortals, to the incomparable beauty of the ſaints in the reſurrection? "Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth "as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father," Matth xiii. 43. In this hope you part with them, therefore act ſuitably to your hopes.

Plea 3. Oh! but my child was nipped off by death in the very bud; I did but ſee, and love, and part: Had I enjoyed it

longer, and had time to ſuck out the ſweetneſs of ſuch an enjoyment, I could have borne it eaſier; but its months or years with me were ſo few, that they only ſerved to raiſe an expectation which was quickly, and therefore the more ſadly diſappointed.

Anſwer 1. Did your friend die young, or was the bond of any other relation diſſolved almoſt as ſoon as made? Let not this ſeem ſo intolerable a load to you; for if you have ground to hope they died in Chriſt, then they lived long enough in this world. It is truly ſaid, he hath ſailed long enough, that hath won the harbour; he hath fought long enough that hath obtained the victory; he hath run long enough that hath touched the goal; and he hath lived long enough upon earth, that hath won heaven, be his days here never ſo few.

Vide *Mr. Baxter's Epiſtle to the Life of Mr. John Janeway.*

Anſwer 2. The ſooner your relation died, the leſs ſin hath been committed, and the leſs ſorrow felt: What can you ſee in this world but ſin, or ſorrow? A quick paſſage through it to glory, is a ſpecial privilege. Surely the world is not ſo deſireable a place, that Chriſtians ſhould deſire an hour's time longer in it for themſelves, or theirs, than ſerves to fit them for a better.

Anſwer 3. And whereas you imagine the parting would have been eaſier, if the enjoyment had been longer, it is a fond, and groundleſs ſuſpicion: The longer you had enjoyed them, the ſtronger would the endearments have been. A young, and tender plant, may be eaſily drawn up by a ſingle hand; but when it hath ſpread, and fixed its root many years in the earth, it will require many a ſtrong blow, and hard tug to root it up. Affections, like thoſe under-ground roots, are fixed and ſtrengthened by nothing more than conſuetude, and long poſſeſſion; it is much eaſier parting now, than it would be hereafter, whatever you think. However, this ſhould ſatisfy you, that God's time is the beſt time.

Plea 4. O but I have loſt all in one, it is my only one, I have none left in its room to repair the breach, and make up the loſs: If God had given me other children to take comfort in, the loſs had not been ſo great; but to loſe all at one ſtroke, is inſupportable.

Anſwer 1. Religion allows not unto Chriſtians a liberty of expreſſing the death of their dear relations by ſo hard a word as

the loſs of them is; they are not loſt, but ſent before you ‡: And it is a ſhameful thing for a Chriſtian to be reproved for ſuch an uncomely expreſſion by a heathen; it is enough to make us bluſh to read what an heathen ſaid in this caſe †, 'Never 'ſay thou haſt loſt any thing (ſaith Epictetus) but that it is re- 'turned Is thy ſon dead? He is only reſtored. Is thy inhe- 'ritance taken from thee? It is alſo returned.' And a while after he adds, Ει τυτο θελει θεος τυτο γενεθω, *i. e.* 'Let every 'thing be as the gods would have it.'

Anſwer 2. It is no fit expreſſion to ſay you have loſt all in one, except that one be Chriſt; and he being once yours, can never be loſt. Doubtleſs, your meaning is, you have loſt all your comfort of that kind; and what though you have? Are there not multitudes of comforts yet remaining, of a higher kind, and more precious and durable nature? If you have no more of that ſort, yet ſo long as you have better, what cauſe have you to rejoice!

Anſwer 3. You too much imitate the way of the world in this complaint; they know not how to repair the loſs of one comfort, but by another of the ſame nature, which muſt be put in its room to fill up the vacancy: But have you no other way to ſupply your loſs? Have you not a God to fill the place of any creature that leaves you? Surely this would better become a man whoſe portion is in this life, than one that profeſſes God is his all in all.

Plea 5. O but my only one is not only taken away, but there remains no expectation, or probability of any more: I muſt now look upon myſelf as a dry tree, never to take comfort in children any more, which is a cutting thought.

Anſwer 1. Suppoſe what you ſay, that you have no hope, nor expectation of another child remaining to you; yet if you have a hope of better things than children, you have no reaſon to be caſt down: Bleſs God for higher and better hopes than theſe. In Iſa. lvi. 4, 5. the Lord comforts them that have no expectations of ſons or daughters, with this; "That he will "give unto them in his houſe, and within his walls, a place, "and a name better than of ſons and daughters; even an ever- "laſting name that ſhall not be cut off" There are better mercies, and higher hopes than theſe; though your hopes of children, or from children, ſhould be cut off, yet if your eternal hopes are ſecure, and ſuch as ſhall not make you aſhamed, you ſhould not be ſo caſt down.

‡ *Non amittuntur ſed praemittuntur.* † *Epict. Enchirid.* cap. 15.

Answer 2. If God will not have your comforts to lie any more in children, then resolve to place them in himself, and you shall never find cause to complain of loss by such an exchange: You will find that in God which is not to be had in the creature; one hour's communion with him, shall give you that which the happiest parent never yet had from his children; you will exchange brass for gold, perishing vanity, for solid and abiding excellency.

Plea 6. But the suddenness of the stroke is amazing, God gave little or no warning to prepare for this trial: Death executed its commission as soon as it opened it. My dear husband, wife, or child, was snatched unexpectedly out of my arms, by a surprizing stroke; and this makes my stroke heavier than my complaint.

Answer 1. That the death of your relation was so sudden and surprizing, was much your own fault, who ought to have lived in the daily sense of its vanity, and expectation of your separation from it; you knew it to be a dying comfort in its best estate, and it is no such wonderful thing to see that dead, which you knew before to be dying: Besides, you heard the changes ringing about you in other families; you frequently saw other parents, husbands, and wives, carrying forth their dead; and what were all these but warnings given you to prepare for the like trials?

Surely, then, it was your own security and regardlessness that made this affliction so surprizing to you; and who is to be blamed for that, you know.

Answer 2. There is much difference betwixt the sudden death of infants, and that of grown persons; the latter may have much work to do; many sins actually to repent of, and many evidences of their interest in Christ to examine and clear, in order to their more comfortable death; and so sudden death may be deprecated by them.

But the case of infants, who exercise not their reason, is far different; they have no such work to do, but are purely passive: All that is done in order to their salvation, is done by God immediately upon them, so it comes all to one, whether their death be more quick, or more slow.

Answer 3. You complain of the suddenness of the stroke; but another will be ready to say, had my friend died in that manner, my affliction had been nothing to what now it is; I have seen many deaths contrived into one; I saw the gradual approaches of it upon my dear relation, who felt every thread of death as it came on toward him, who often cried with Job, chap.

iii. ver. 21, 22. "Wherefore is light given to him that is in mi-
" ſery, and life to the bitter in ſoul? Which long for death, but
" it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treaſures:
" Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find
" the grave."

That which you reckon the ſting of your affliction, others would have reckoned a favour and privilege. How many tender parents, and other relations, who loved their friends as dearly as yourſelves, have been forced to their knees, upon no other errand but this, to beg the Lord to haſten the ſeparation, and put an end to that ſorrow, which to them was much greater than the ſorrow for the dead.

Plea 7. You preſs me to moderation of ſorrows, and I know I ought to ſhew it; but you do not know how the caſe ſtands with me, there is a ſting in this affliction, that none feels but myſelf; and, O! how intolerable is it now! I neglected proper means in ſeaſon to preſerve life, or miſcarried in the uſe of means. I now ſee ſuch a neglect, or ſuch a miſtake about the means, as I cannot but judge greatly to contribute to that ſad loſs which I now, too late, lament.

O my negligence, O my raſhneſs, and inconſiderateneſs! how doth my conſcience now ſmite me for my folly! and by this aggravate my burden beyond what is uſually felt by others. Had I ſeaſonably applied myſelf to the uſe of proper means, and kept ſtrictly to ſuch courſes and counſels as thoſe that are able and skilful might have preſcribed, I might now have had a living husband, wife, or child: whereas I am now not only bereaved, but am apt to think I have bereaved myſelf of them. Surely there is no ſorrow like unto my ſorrow.

Anſwer 1. Though it be an evil to neglect, and ſlight the means ordained by God for recovery of health, yet it is no leſs evil to aſcribe too much to them, or rely too much on them: the beſt means in the world are weak and ineffectual, without God's aſſiſtance and concurrence, and they never have that his aſſiſtance or concurrence, when his time is come; and that it was fully come in your friend's caſe, is manifeſted now by the event. So that if your friend had had the moſt excellent helps the world affords, they would have availed nothing. This conſideration takes place only in your caſe, who ſee what the will of God is by the iſſue, and may not be pleaded by any whilſt it remains dubious and uncertain, as it generally doth in time of ſickneſs.

Anſwer 2. Do you not unjuſtly charge, and blame yourſelves for that which is not really your fault, or neglect? How far you are chargeable in this caſe, will beſt appear by comparing

the circumſtances you are now in, with thoſe you were in when your relation was only arreſted by ſickneſs; and it was dubious to you what was your duty, and beſt courſe to take.

Poſſibly you had obſerved ſo many to periſh in phyſicians hands, and ſo many to recover without them, that you judged it ſafer for your friend to be without thoſe means, than to be hazarded by them.

Or, if divers methods and courſes were preſcribed, and perſuaded to, and you now ſee your error, in preferring that which was moſt improper, and neglecting what was more ſafe, and probable: yet as long as it did not ſo appear to your underſtanding at that time, but you followed the beſt light you had to guide you at that time, it were moſt unjuſt to charge the fault upon yourſelves, for chuſing that courſe that then ſeemed beſt to you, whether it were ſo in itſelf, or not.

To be angry with yourſelves for doing, or omitting what was then done, or ommitted, according to your beſt diſcretion, and judgment, becauſe you now ſee it by the light of the event, far otherwiſe than you did before; it is to be troubled that you are but men, or that you are not as God, who only can forſee iſſues, and events; and that you acted as all rational creatures are bound to do, according to the light they have, at the time and ſeaſon of action.

Anſwer 3. To conclude, Times of great affliction are ordinarily times of great temptation, and it is uſual with Satan then to charge us with more ſins than we are guilty of, and alſo make thoſe things to be ſins, which, upon impartial examination, will not be found to be ſo.

Indeed, had your neglect or miſcarriage been known or voluntary, or had you really preferred a little money (being able to give it) before the life of your relation, and did deliberately chuſe to hazard this, rather than part with that; no doubt, then, but there had been much evil of ſin mixed with your affliction; and your conſcience may juſtly ſmite you for it, as your ſin; but in the other caſe, which is more common, and I preſume yours; it is a falſe charge, and you ought not to abet the deſign of Satan in it.

Judge by the ſorrow you now feel by your friend, in what degree he was dear to you, and what you could now willingly give to ranſom his life, if it could be done with money. Judge, I ſay, by this, how groundleſs the charge is that Satan now draws up againſt you, and you are but too ready to yield to the truth of it.

Plea 8. But my troubles are upon a higher ſcore, and account

my child or friend is paſſed into eternity, and I know not how it is with his ſoul: were I ſure my relation were with Chriſt, I ſhould be quiet; but my fears of the contrary are overwhelming; O it is terrible to think of the damnation of one ſo dear to me.

Anſwer 1. Admit what the objection ſuppoſes, that you have real grounds to fear the eternal condition of your dear relation; yet it is utterly unbeſeeming you, even in ſuch a caſe as this, to diſpute with, or repine againſt the Lord.

I do confeſs it is a ſore and heavy trial, and that there is no cauſe more ſad, and ſinking to the ſpirit of a gracious perſon: their death is but a trifle to this; but yet if you be ſuch as fear the Lord, methinks his indiſputable ſovereignty over them, and his diſtinguiſhing love and mercy to you, ſhould at leaſt ſilence you in this matter.

Firſt, His indiſputable ſovereignty over them, Rom. ix. 20. "Who art thou, O man, who diſputeſt with God?" He ſpeaks in the matters of eternal election, and reprobation. What if the Lord will not be gracious to thoſe that are ſo dear to us? Is there any wrong done to them or us thereby? Aaron's two ſons were cut off in the act of ſin, by the Lord's immediate hand, and yet he held his peace, Lev. x. 3. God told Abraham plainly, that the covenant ſhould not be eſtabliſhed with Iſhmael, for whom he ſo earneſtly prayed, *O let Iſhmael live before thee!* and he knew that there was no ſalvation out of the covenant, and yet he ſits down ſilent under the word of the Lord.

Secondly, But if this do not quiet you, yet methinks his diſtinguiſhing love and mercy to you ſhould do it. O what do you owe to God, that root and branch hath not been caſt together into the fire! that the Lord hath given you good hope, through grace that it ſhall be well with you for ever. Let this ſtop your mouth, and quiet your ſpirit, though you would have grounds for this fear.

Anſwer 2. But pray examine the grounds of your fear, whether it may not proceed from the ſtrength of your affections to the eternal welfare of your friend, or from the ſubtilty of Satan, deſigning hereby to overwhelm and ſwallow you up in ſuppoſed, as well as from juſt grounds and cauſes? In two caſes it is very probable your fear may proceed only from your own affection, or Satan's temptation.

Firſt, If your relation died young, before it did any thing to deſtroy your hopes. Or,

Secondly, If grown, and in ſome good degree hopeful; only

he did not in life, or at death, manifeſt, and give evidence of grace, with that clearneſs as you deſired.

As to the caſe of infants in general, it is none of our concern to judge their condition; and as for thoſe that ſprang from covenanted parents, it becomes us to exerciſe charity towards them; the ſcripture ſpeaks very favourably of them.

And as for the more adult, who have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, and made conſcience of ſin and duty, albeit they never manifeſted what you could deſire they had; yet in them, as in young Abijah, "may be found ſome good things towards "the Lord," which you never took notice of. Reverence of your authority, baſhfulneſs, and ſhame-facedneſs, reſervedneſs of diſpoſition, and many other things, may hide thoſe ſmall and weak beginnings of grace that are in children, from the obſervations of the parents. God might ſee that in them that you never ſaw; he deſpiſeth not the day of ſmall things.

However it be, it is now out of your reach; your concernment rather is to improve the affliction to your own good, than judge and determine their condition, which belongs not to you but to God.

Plea 9. O but I have ſinned in this relation, and God hath puniſhed my ſin in diſſolving it. O, ſaith one, my heart was ſet too much upon it, I even idolized it, that was my ſin: and, ſaith another, I wanted due affections, and did not love my relation, at leaſt not ſo ſpiritually as I ought; that was my ſin. Now God is viſiting me for all the neglects and defects that hath been in me towards my relation.

Anſwer 1. There is no man ſo thoroughly ſanctified, as not to fail, and come ſhort in many things pertaining to his relative duties: and to ſpeak, as the thing is, the corruptions of the holieſt perſons are as much diſcovered in this, as any other thing whatſoever; and it is a very common thing for conſcience, not only to charge theſe failures upon us, but to aggravate them to the utmoſt when God hath made the ſeparation. So that this is no more than what is uſual, and very common, with perſons in your caſe.

Anſwer 2. Admit that which the objection ſuppoſes, that God had afflicted you for your ſin, and removed that comfort from you, which you idolized, and too much doted on; yet there is no reaſon you ſhould be ſo caſt down under your affliction: For all this may be, and probably is the fruit of his love to, and care of your ſoul, Rev. iii. 19. He tells the afflicted, for their comfort, "Whom I love, I rebuke and chaſten." How

much better is it to have an idolized enjoyment taken from you, in mercy, than if God ſhould ſay concerning you, as he did of Ephraim, Hoſea iv. 17. "He is joined to idols, let him alone."

O it is better for you that your Father now reckons with you for your follies with the rod in his hand, than to ſay as he doth to ſome, let them go on, I will not hinder them in, or rebuke them for their ſinful courſes; but will reckon with them for all together in hell at laſt.

Anſwer 3. And as to what you now charge upon yourſelf, that the neglect of duty did ſpring from the want of love to your relation; your ſorrow at parting may evidence that your relation was rooted deep in your affection; but if your love was not ſo ſpiritual and pure, to love and enjoy them in God; that was undoubtedly your ſin, and is the ſin of moſt Chriſtians, for which both you, and all others, ought to be humbled.

Plea 10. God hath bleſſed me with an eſtate, and outward comforts in the world, which I reckoned to have left to my poſterity; and now I have none to leave it with, nor have I any comfort to think of it; the purpoſes of my heart are broken off, and the comfort of all my other enjoyments blaſted by this ſtroke in an hour. How are the pains and cares of many years periſhed.

Anſwer 1. How many are there in the world, yea, of our own acquaintance, whom God hath either denied, or deprived both of the comforts of children and eſtates too? If he have left you thoſe outward comforts, you ought to acknowledge his goodneſs therein, and not to ſlight theſe becauſe he hath deprived you of the other.

Anſwer 2. Though your children are gone, yet God hath many children left in the world, whoſe bowels you may refreſh with what he hath beſtowed upon you; and your charity to them will doubtleſs turn to a more conſiderable account, than if you had left a large eſtate to your own poſterity.

Surely we are not ſent into this world to heap up great eſtates for our children: and if you have been too eager in this deſign, you may now read God's juſt rebuke of your folly. Bleſs God you have yet an opportunity to ſerve him eminently by your charity, and God deny you other executors, let your own hands be your executors, to diſtribute to the neceſſity of the ſaints, that the bleſſings of them that are ready to periſh may come upon you.

Plea 11. O but the remembrance of its witty words, and pretty actions, is wounding.

Anſwer 1. Let it rather lift up your hearts to God in praiſe,

that gave you ſo deſirable a child, than fill your heart with diſcontent at his hand in removing it. How many parents are there in the world, whoſe children God hath deprived of reaſon and underſtanding, ſo that they only differ from the beaſts in external ſhape and figure? And how many ſhew betimes ſo perverſe a temper, that little comfort can be expected from them.

Anſwer 2. Theſe are but ſmall circumſtances, and trivial things in themſelves; but by theſe little things Satan manages a great deſign againſt your ſoul, to deject or exaſperate it: And ſurely this is not your buſineſs at this time; you have greater things than the words and actions of children to mind; to ſearch out God's ends in the affliction, to mortify the corruption it is ſent to rebuke, to quiet your hearts in the will of God; this is your work.

Plea 12. *Laſtly*, It is objected, O but God hides his face from me in my affliction; it is dark within, as well as without, and this makes my caſe more deplorable, greatly afflicted, and ſadly deſerted.

Anſwer 1. Though you want at preſent ſenſible comfort, yet you have reaſon to be thankful for gracious ſupports. Though the light of God's countenance ſhine not upon you, yet you find the everlaſting arms are underneath you; the care of God worketh for you, when the conſolations of God are withdrawn from you.

Anſwer 2. To have God hide his face in the time of trouble, is no new or unuſual thing; God's deareſt ſaints, yea, his own Son, hath experienced it, who in the deeps of inward and outward trouble, when wave called unto wave, felt not thoſe ſweet, ſenſible influences of comfort from God, which had always filled his ſoul formerly. If Chriſt cry in extremity, "My God, "my God, why haſt thou forſaken me!" Then ſure we need not wonder, as if ſome ſtrange thing had happened to us.

Anſwer 3. May not your ſubmiſſive carriage under the rod provoke God to hide his face from you. Pray conſider it well, nothing is more probable than for this to be the cauſe of God's withdrawment from you. Could you, in meekneſs and quietneſs, receive that cup your Father hath given you to drink: accept the puniſhment of your iniquities; ſay, Good is the word of the Lord, It is the Lord, let him do what he will: You would ſoon find the caſe altered with you; but the comforting ſpirit finds no delight, or reſt, in a turbulent and tumultuous breaſt.

And thus I have satisfied the most considerable pleas urged, in justification of our excesses.

4. I come now to the last thing proposed namely the means of curing and preventing these sinful excesses of sorrow for the death of our dear relations.

And although much hath been said already to dissuade from this evil, and I have enlarged already much beyond my first intention; yet I shall cast in some farther help and assistance towards the healing of this distemper, by prescribing the following rules:

Rule 1. *If you would not mourn excessively for the loss of creature-comforts, then beware that you set not your delight and love excessively, or inordinately, upon them, whilst you do enjoy them.*

Strong affections make strong afflictions; the higher the tide, the lower the ebb. According to the measure of our delight in the enjoyment, is our grief in the loss of these things. The apostle knits these two graces, temperance and patience, together, in the precept, 2 Pet. i. 16. and it is very observable how intemperance and impatience are inseparably linked in experience, yea, the experience of the best men. You read, Gen. xxxvii. 3. "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, "because he was the son of his old age; and made him a coat "of many colours."

This was the darling; Jacob's heart was so exceedingly set upon him, his very life was bound up in the life of the lad. Now when the supposed death of his child was brought to him, how did he carry it? See ver. 34, 35. "And Jacob rent his "clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins; and mourned for "his son many days; And all his sons, and all his daughters, "rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And "he said, for I will go down into the grave to my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him."

Here, as in a glass, are the effects of excessive love to a child represented: Here you may see what work immoderate love will make, even in a sanctified heart.

O therefore let your moderation be known to all men, in your delights and sorrows about earthly things; for ordinarily the proportion of the one is answerable to the other.

Rule 2. *If you would not be overwhelmed with grief for the loss of your relations, be exact and careful in discharging your duties to them while you have them.*

The testimony of your conscience, that you have laboured in all things to discharge the duties you owed to your relations,

whilſt they were with you, will prove an excellent allay to your ſorrows for them when they are no longer yours. It is not ſo much the ſingle affliction, as the guilt charged upon us in times of affliction, that makes our load ſo heavy.

O what a terrible thing is it to look upon our dead friends, whilſt conſcience is accuſing and upbraiding us for our duties neglected, and ſuch or ſuch ſins committed? O you little think how dreadful a ſpectacle this will make the dead body of thy friend to thee!

Conſcience, if not quite ſtupid or dead, will ſpeak at ſuch a time. O therefore, as ever you would provide for a comfortable parting at death, or meet again at judgment; be exact, punctual, and circumſpect, in all your relative duties.

Rule 3. *If you would not be overwhelmed by trouble for the loſs of dear relations, then turn to God under your trouble, and pour out your ſorrows, by prayer, into his boſom.*

This will eaſe and allay your troubles. Bleſſed be God for the ordinance of prayer; how much are all the ſaints beholden to it, at all times, but eſpecially in heart-ſinking and diſtreſsful times? It is ſome relief, when in diſtreſs, we can pour out our trouble into the boſom of a wife, or faithful friend; how much more when we leave our complaint before the gracious, wiſe, and faithful God? I told you before of that holy man, who having loſt his dear and only ſon, got to his cloſet, there poured out his ſoul freely to the Lord, and when he came down to his friends, that were waiting below to comfort him, and fearing how he would bear that ſtroke, he came from his duty with a cheerful countenance, telling them he would be content to bury a ſon, if it were poſſible, every day, provided he might enjoy ſuch comfort as his ſoul had found in that private hour.

Go thy way, Chriſtian, to thy God, get thee to thy knees in the cloudy and dark day; retire from all creatures, that thou mayeſt have thy full liberty with thy God, and there pour out thy heart before him, in free, full, and broken-hearted confeſſions of ſin: Judge thyſelf worthy of hell, as well as of this trouble; juſtify God in all his ſmarteſt ſtrokes; beg him, in this diſtreſs, to put under thee everlaſting arms; intreat one ſmile, one gracious look, to enlighten thy darkneſs, and chear thy drooping ſpirit. Say, with the prophet, Jer. xvii. 17. "Be thou not a terror to me; thou art my hope in the day of "evil." And try what relief ſuch a courſe will afford thee. Surely, if thy heart be ſincere in this courſe, thou ſhalt be able to ſay with that holy man, Pſalm xciv. 19. "In the multitude

" of my thoughts which I had within me, thy comforts have " delighted my ſoul."

Rule 4. *If you would bear the loſs of your dear relations with moderation, eye God in the whole proceſs of the affliction more, and ſecondary cauſes and circumſtances of the matter leſs.*

" I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt " it," Pſal. xxxix. 9. Conſider the hand of the Lord in the whole matter: And that,

Firſt, As a ſovereign hand, which hath right to diſpoſe of thee, and all thy comforts, without thy leave or conſent, Job xxxiii. 13.

Secondly, As a father's hand correcting thee in love and faithfulneſs. Prov. iii. 11. " Whom the Lord loveth he cor- " recteth, as a father the ſon in whom he delighteth." O if once you could but ſee affliction as a rod in a father's hand, proceeding from his love, and intended for your eternal good; how quiet would you then be?

And ſurely if it draws your heart nearer to God, and mortifies it more to this vain world, it is a rod in the hand of ſpecial love: If it end in your love to God, doubt not but it comes from God's love to you.

Thirdly, As a juſt and righteous hand. Haſt not thou procured this to thyſelf by thy own folly? Yea, the Lord is juſt in all that is come upon thee; whatever he hath done, yet he hath done thee no wrong.

Fourthly, Laſtly, As a moderate and merciful hand that hath puniſhed thee leſs than thine iniquities deſerve: He that hath caſt thee into affliction, might juſtly have caſt thee into hell. It is of the Lord's mercy that thou art not conſumed. Why doth the living man complain?

Rule 5. *If you would bear your affliction with moderation, compare it with the afflictions of other men, and that will greatly quiet your ſpirits.*

You have no cauſe to ſay God hath dealt bitterly with you, and that there is no ſorrow like your ſorrow: Look round about you, and impartially conſider the condition that others are in; and they nothing inferior to you in any reſpect. You had one dead child, Aaron had two at a ſtroke, Job all at one ſtroke; and both theſe by an immediate ſtroke from the hand of God. Some godly parents have lived to ſee their children die in their ſin by the hand of juſtice; others have ſeen them live to the diſhonour of God, and breaking of their own ſpirits, and would have eſteemed it a mercy if they had died from the womb, and

given up the ghoſt when they came out of the belly, as Job ſpeaks.

In what miſery have ſome parents ſeen their children die! God holding them as ſo many terrible ſpectacles of miſery before their eyes; ſo that they have begged the Lord, with importunity, to let looſe his hands, and cut them off; death being, in their eſteem, nothing to thoſe continual agonies in which they have ſeen them lie weltering from day to day. O you little know what a bitter cup others have had given them to drink? Surely, if you compare, you muſt ſay, the Lord hath dealt gently and graciouſly with me.

Rule 6. *Carefully ſhun, and avoid whatſoever may renew your ſorrow, or provoke you to impatience.*

Increaſe not your ſorrow by the ſight of, or diſcourſes about ſad objects; and labour to avoid them, as occaſions preſented by the enemy of your ſouls, to draw forth the corruptions of your heart.

I told you before, why Jacob would not have the child of which Rachel died, called after the name his wife had given, Benoni, the ſon of my ſorrow; leſt it ſhould prove a daily occaſion of renewing his trouble for the loſs of his dear wife; but he called his name Benjamin.

Your impatience is like tinder, or gun-powder, ſo long as you can prevent the ſparks from falling on it, there is no great danger; but you that carry ſuch dangerous prepared matter in your own hearts, cannot be too careful to prevent them. Do by murmuring, as you do by blaſphemous thoughts; think quite another way, and give no occaſion.

Rule 7. *In the day of your mourning for the death of your friends, ſeriouſly conſider your own death as approaching, and that you, and your dead friend are diſtinguiſhed by a ſmall interval and point of time.* 2 Sam. xi. 13. *I ſhall go to him.* Surely the thoughts of your own death, as approaching alſo, will greatly allay your ſorrows for the dead that are gone before you.

We are apt to fancy a long life in the world, and then the loſs of thoſe comforts which we promiſed ourſelves ſo much of the ſweetneſs and comforts of our lives from, ſeems an intolerable thing.

But would you realize your own deaths more, you would not be ſo deeply concerned for their deaths as you are. Could you but look into your own graves more ſeriouſly, you would be able to look into your friend's grave more compoſedly.

And thus I have finiſhed what I deſigned from this ſcripture. The Father of mercies, and God of all comforts, whoſe full prerogative it is to comfort them that are caſt down, write all his truths upon your hearts, that they may abide there, and reduce your diſordered affections to that frame which beſt ſuits the will of God, and the profeſſion you make of ſubjection and reſignation thereunto.

PREPARATIONS FOR SUFFERINGS;

OR,

The beſt WORK in the worſt TIMES.

Wherein the Neceſſity, Excellency, and Means of our readineſs for Sufferings are evinced and preſcribed; our Call to Suffering cleared, and the great unreadineſs of many Profeſſors bewailed.

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

IT was the obſervation of the learned Gerſon (when the world was not ſo old, by many years, as now it is) that *mundus ſeneſcens patitur phantaſias*: The aged world, like aged perſons, dotes, and grows whimſical, in its old age; the truth of which obſervation is confirmed by no one thing more, than the fond and groundleſs dreams, and phantaſms of tranquillity, and continuing proſperity, wherewith the multitude pleaſe themſelves, even whilſt the ſins of the times are ſo great, and the ſigns of the times ſo ſad and lowring as they are.

It is not the deſign of this *Manual* to ſcare, and affright any man, with imaginary dangers, much leſs to ſow jealouſies, and foment the diſcontents of the times; it being a juſt matter of lamentation, that all the tokens of God's anger produce with many of us no better fruit but bold cenſures, and loud clamours, inſtead of humiliation for our own ſins, and due pre-

paration to take up our own croſs, and follow Chriſt in a ſuffering path, which is the only mark and aim of this tract.

We read the hiſtories of the primitive ſufferers, but not with a ſpirit prepared to follow them. Some cenſure them as too prodigal of their blood, and others commend their courage, and conſtancy; but where are they that ſincerely reſolve, and prepare to be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes? Heb. vi. 12. or take them for an "example of ſuffering, affliction, and of patience," Jam. v. 10.

It is as much our intereſt, as it is our duty, to be ſeaſonably awakened out of our pleaſant, but moſt pernicious drowzineſs. Troubles will be ſo much the more ſinking, and intolerable, by how much they ſteal upon us by way of ſurprizal. For look, as expectation deflowers any temporal comfort, by ſucking out much of the ſweetneſs thereof before-hand, and ſo we find the leſs in it when we come to the actual enjoyment: So the expectation of evils abates much of the dread and terror, by accuſtoming our thoughts before-hand to them, and making preparation for them: So that we find them not ſo grievous, amazing, and intolerable, when they are come indeed.

This was exemplified to us very lively by holy Mr. Bradford the martyr, when the keeper's wife came running into his chamber, ſaying, 'O, Mr Bradford, I bring you heavy tidings, 'for to-morrow you muſt be burned, your chain is now buying, 'and preſently you muſt go to Newgate.' He put off his hat, and looking up to heaven, ſaid, O Lord, I thank thee for it; I have looked for this a long time: It comes not ſuddenly to me, the Lord make me worthy of it. See in this example the ſingular advantage of a prepared and ready ſoul.

Reader, The cup of ſufferings is a very bitter cup, and it is but needful that we provide ſomewhat to ſweeten it, that we may be able to receive it with thankſgiving; and what thoſe ſweetening ingredients are, and how to prepare them, you will have ſome direction and help in the following diſcourſe; which hath once already been preſented to the public view; and that it may at this time alſo (wherein nothing can be more ſeaſonable) become farther uſeful, and aſſiſting, to the people of God in their preſent duties, is the hearty deſire of

Thine,
and the church's
ſervant in Chriſt,
JOHN FLAVEL.

ACTS xxi. 13.

Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the text is opened, and the doctrine propounded.

THE Divine providence is not more signally discovered in governing the motions of the clouds, than it is in disposing and ordering the spirits and motions of the ministers of the gospel, who, in a mystical sense, are fruitful clouds, to dispense the showers of gospel-blessings to the world. The motion of the clouds is not spontaneous, but they move as they are moved by the winds; neither can gospel-ministers chuse their own stations, and govern their own motions, but must go when and where the Spirit and providence of God directs and guides them; as will evidently appear in that dangerous voyage to Jerusalem in which the apostle was at this time engaged. Acts xx. 22. "And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit to "Jerusalem," [bound in the Spirit:] Alluding to the watery vapours which are bound up in clouds, and conveyed according to the motions of the winds. This journey was full of danger; Paul foresaw his business was not only to plant the gospel at Jerusalem with his doctrine, but to water it also with his blood; but so effectually was his will determined by the will of God, that he chearfully complies with his duty therein, whatsoever difficulties and dangers did attend it.

And indeed it was his great advantage, that the will of God was so plainly, and convincingly revealed to him touching this matter; for no sooner did he employ himself to obey this call of God, but he is presently assaulted by many strong temptations to decline it.

The first rub he met in his way, was from the disciples of Tyre, who pretending to speak by the Spirit, said unto Paul, that he should not go up to Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 4. The Lord by this trying the spirit of his apostle much, as he did the young prophet coming from Judea to Bethel, 1 Kings xiii. 18. but not with like success.

His next discouragement was at Caesarea, where Agabus (whom Dorotheus affirms to be of the seventy-two disciples, and had before prophesied of the famine in the reign of Claudius,

which accordingly came to paſs) takes Paul's girdle, and binding his own hands and feet with it, ſaid, "Thus ſaith the Holy "Ghoſt, ſo ſhall the Jews at Jeruſalem bind the man that own-"eth this girdle, and ſhall deliver him into the hands of the "Gentiles," Acts xxi. 11. And ſurely he was not ignorant what he muſt expect whenever he ſhould fall into their hands; yet neither could this affright him from his duty.

But then, laſt of all, he meeteth with the ſoreſt trial from his deareſt friends, who fell upon him with paſſionate intreaties, and many tears, beſeeching him to decline that journey: O they could not give up ſuch a miniſter as Paul was! this even melted him down, and almoſt broke his heart, which yet was eaſier to do, than to turn him out of the path of obedience: Where, by the way, we may note two things:

Firſt, That divine precept, not providence, is to rule out our way of duty.

Secondly, That no hindrances, or diſcouragements, whatſoever, will juſtify our neglect of a known duty.

All theſe rubs he paſſes over; all theſe diſcouragements he overcame, with this heroic and truly Chriſtian reſolution in the text; "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? For "I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem, "for the name of the Lord Jeſus."

In which words we have,

1. A loving and gentle rebuke.
2. A quieting and calming argument.

Firſt, He lovingly and gently rebukes their fond and inordinate ſorrow for his departure, in theſe words, *What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart?* As if he ſhould ſay, What mean theſe paſſionate intreaties, and tempting tears? To what purpoſe is all this a-do? They are but ſo many ſnares of Satan, to turn my heart out of the way of obedience: You do as much as in you lies to break my heart; let there be no more of this, I beſeech you.

Secondly, He labours to charm their unruly paſſions with a very quieting and calming argument; *For I am ready*, &c. ἑτοίμως ἔχω, *parate habeo*. I am prepared, and fitted for the greateſt ſufferings which ſhall befal me in the purſuit of my duty; be it a priſon, or be it death, I am provided for either: Liberty is dear, and life much dearer, but Chriſt is dearer than either.

But what was there in all this, to ſatisfy them whoſe trouble it was to ſee him ſo forward? Let the words be conſidered,

and we shall find divers things in them to satisfy and quiet their hearts, and make them willing to give him up.

First, I am ready; that is, God hath fitted and prepared my heart for the greatest sufferings; this is the work of God: flesh and blood would never be brought to this, were not all its interests and inclinations subdued, and over-ruled by the Spirit of God. What do ye therefore in all this, but work against the design of God, who hath fitted and prepared my heart for this service?

Secondly, I am ready; that is, my will and resolution stands in a full bent, my heart is fixed, you cannot therefore study to do me a greater injury, than to discompose and disorder my heart again, by casting such temptations as these in my way, to cause the flesh to rebel, and the enemy that is within to renew his opposition.

Thirdly, I am ready; that is, my heart is so fixed to follow the call of God, whatever shall befal me, that all your tears and intreaties to the contrary are but cast away; they cannot alter my fixed purpose; you had as good be quiet, and chearfully resign me to the will of God.

Thus you see the equipage and preparation of Paul's spirit to receive both bonds and death for Christ at Jerusalem; this made him victorious over the temptations of friends, and the malice and cruelty of his enemies: By this readiness, and preparation of his mind, he was carried through all, and enabled to finish his course with joy. From hence the observation is,

Doct. *That it is a blessed and excellent thing, for the people of God to be prepared, and ready for the hardest service, and worst of sufferings, to which the Lord may call them.*

This is that which every gracious heart is reaching after, praying, and striving to obtain; but ah! how few will attain it! Certainly there are not many among the multitudes of the professors of this generation, that can say as Paul here did, "I am "ready to be bound, or to die for Christ."

CHAP. II.

Shews, that although God takes no delight in afflicting his people, yet he sometimes exposeth them to great and grievous sufferings: with a brief account why, and how he calls them thereunto.

THE mercies and compassions of God over his people are exceeding great and tender, Psal. ciii. 13. "Like as "a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that

" fear him." He delights not in afflicting and grieving them, Lam. iii. 33. " He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the " children of men." The ſcripture intimates to us a ſeeming conflict betwixt the juſtice and mercy of God, when he is about to deliver up his people into their enemies hands, Hoſea xi. 8, 9. " How ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim? How ſhall I deliver " thee, Iſrael? How ſhall I make thee as Adma? How ſhall " I ſet thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my " repentings are kindled together." Which ſhews us with what reluctance, and great unwillingneſs the Lord goes about ſuch a work as this. The work of judgment is his *ſtrange work*, it pleaſes him better to execute the milder attribute of mercy towards his children. Hence we find, when he is preparing to execute his judgments, that he delays the execution as long as the honour of his name, and ſafety of his people will permit, Jer. xliv. 23. He bears till he can bear no longer: he often turns away his wrath from them, Pſal. lxxviii. 38, 39. He tries them by leſſer judgments, and gentler corrections, to prevent greater, Amos iv. 6. When his people are humbled under the threatenings of his wrath, his heart is melted into compaſſion to them, Jer. xxxi. 17, 20. and whenever his mercy prevails againſt judgment, it is with joy and triumph, Jam. ii. 13. *Mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment.*

For he feels his own tender compaſſions yerning over them; he foreſeeth, and is no way willing to gratify the inſulting pride of his, and their enemies. Deut. xxxii. 26, 27. " I ſaid I " would ſcatter them into corners, I would make the remem- " brance of them to ceaſe from among men, were it not that I " feared the wrath of the enemy, leſt their adverſaries ſhould " behave themſelves ſtrangely," *&c.*

Yet all this, notwithſtanding, it often falls out, by the provocations of his ſons and daughters, that the Lord gives them up into the hands of their enemies for the correction of their evils, and the manifeſtation of his own glory. Seneca, though a heathen, could ſay, that God loves his people with a maſculine love, not with a womaniſh indulgence, and tenderneſs: If need require, they ſhall be in heavineſs through manifold temptations, 1 Pet. i. 6. He had rather their hearts ſhould be heavy under adverſity, than vain and careleſs under proſperity; the choiceſt ſpirits have been exerciſed with the ſharpeſt ſufferings, and thoſe that now ſhine as ſtars in heaven, have been trode under foot as dung on the earth, 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12, 13. " Unto this preſent hour we both hunger and thirſt, and are " naked, and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place,

" and labour, working with our own hands; being reviled we " bleſs, being perſecuted we ſuffer it, being defamed we intreat; " we are made as the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of " all things unto this day." The eleventh chapter to the Hebrews is a compendium of the various and grievous ſufferings of the primitive ſaints: " They were tortured, they were ſawn " aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword, they " wandered about in ſheep-skins and goat-skins, being afflicted, " deſtitute, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy; " they wandered in deſerts, and in mountains, in dens, and " caves of the earth." And ſince the earth hath dried up thoſe rivers of precious blood, whereof the ſacred records make mention, what ſeas of Chriſtians blood have ſince thoſe days been ſhed by bloody perſecutors? Hiſtories inform us, that in the ten primitive perſecutions, ſo many of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus Chriſt have been ſlain, as that you may allow five thouſand a day to every day in the whole year. Thoſe bloody emperors ſported themſelves with the deaths of God's deareſt ſaints; many precious Chriſtians were burnt by night at Rome, to ſerve as torches to light their enemies in their paſſage through the ſtreets; eight hundred thouſand martyrs are mentioned within the ſpace of thirty years, ſince the Jeſuits aroſe out of the bottomleſs pit.

To what grievous ſufferings did the Lord give up thoſe precious ſervants of Chriſt, the Waldenſes, and Albigenſes, who received the light of reformation about the year 1260, when the fogs of Antichriſtian darkneſs had overſpread the earth! a people ſound in judgment, as appears by their letters, catechiſms, and confeſſions, which are extant; a people of a ſimple, plain, and inoffenſive behaviour: Yet, with what fury and rage did that impious pope Pius perſecute them to deſtruction! driving them into the woods and mountains, except the aged, and children that could not flee, who were murdered in the way: Some famiſhed in the caves, and clefts of the rocks; others endured the rack for eight hours together; ſome beaten with iron rods, others thrown from the tops of high towers, and daſhed to pieces.

What bloody ſhambles, and ſlaughter-houſes, have France, Ireland, and England, been made by popiſh cruelty! More might be related out of each ſtory, than a tender-hearted reader is able to bear the rehearſal of. But what God hath done, he may do again: We are not better than our fathers, diſmal clouds of indignation are gathering over our heads, charged with double deſtruction; ſhould the Lord pleaſe to make them

break upon us; we cannot imagine the rage of Satan to be abated, now that his kingdom haſtens to its period, Rev. xii. 12. nor are his inſtruments grown leſs cruel, and skilful to deſtroy. The land, indeed, hath enjoyed a long reſt, and this generation is acquainted with little more of martyrdom, than what the hiſtories of former times inform us of: But yet let no man befool himſelf with a groundleſs expectation of continuing tranquillity. Auguſtine thinks that the bloody ſweat which over-ran the body of Chriſt in the garden, ſignified the ſharp and grievous ſufferings which in his myſtical body he ſhould afterwards endure; and indeed it is a truth, that theſe are alſo called the remains of Chriſt's ſufferings, Col. i. 24. His *perſonal ſufferings* were indeed compleated at his reſurrection, that cup was full to the brim, to which no drop of ſufferings can be added; but his ſufferings in his myſtical body are not yet full; by his perſonal ſufferings he fully ſatisfied the wrath of God, but the ſufferings of his people have not yet ſatisfied the wrath of men: Though millions of precious ſaints have ſhed their blood for Chriſt, whoſe ſouls are now crying under the altar, *How long, Lord! how long!* yet there are many more coming on behind, in the ſame path of perſecution, and much Chriſtian blood muſt yet be ſhed, before the myſtery of God be finiſhed; and notwithſtanding this lucid interval, the clouds ſeem to be returning again after the rain. Thus you ſee to what grievous ſufferings the merciful God hath ſometimes called his deareſt people.

Now God may be ſaid to call forth his people to ſuffer, when he ſo hedgeth them in by providence, that there is no way to eſcape ſuffering, but by ſinning; whatſoever providence labours with ſuch a dilemma as this, is a plain ſignification of God's will to us in that caſe. We may not now expect extraordinary calls to ſuffering work, as ſome of the ſaints had of old, Gen. xxii. 2. Acts ix. 16. but when our way is ſo ſhut up by providence, that we cannot avoid ſuffering, but by ſtepping over the hedge of the command, God will have us look upon that exigence as his call to ſuffer: And if the reaſons be demanded, why the Lord, who is ſo inclined to mercy, doth often hedge in his own people, by his providence, in a ſuffering path; let us know, that in ſo doing, he doth both,

1. Illuſtrate his own glory. And,
2. Promote his people's happineſs.

Firſt, Hereby the moſt wiſe God doth illuſtrate the glory of his own name, clearing up the righteouſneſs of his ways by the ſufferings of his own people: By this the world ſhall ſee, that how well ſoever he loves them, he will not indulge or pa-

tronize their ſins; if they will be ſo diſingenuous to abuſe his favours, he will be ſo juſt to make them ſuffer for their ſins, and by thoſe very ſufferings will provide for his own glory, which was by them clouded in the eyes of the world. He hates not ſin a jot the leſs, becauſe it is found in his own people, Amos iii. 2. And though, for the magnifying of his mercy, he will pardon their ſins, yet, for the clearing of his righteouſneſs, he will take vengeance upon their inventions, Pſal. xcix. 8.

Moreover, by expoſing his people to ſuch grievous ſufferings, he gives a fit opportunity to manifeſt the glory of his power in their ſupport, and of his wiſdom, in the marvellous ways of their eſcape and deliverance. It is one of the greateſt wonders in the world, how the church ſubſiſts under ſuch fierce and frequent aſſaults as are made upon it by its enemies. "I will "turn aſide (ſaid Moſes) and ſee this great ſight, why the buſh "is not conſumed," Exod. iii. 3. That flaming buſh was a lively emblem of the oppreſſed church in Egypt; the crackling flames noted the heat of their perſecution, the remaining of the buſh unconſumed in the flames, ſignified the wonderful power of God in their preſervation: No people are ſo privileged, ſo protected, ſo delivered, as the people of God. Much leſs oppoſition than hath been made againſt the church, hath overturned, and utterly deſtroyed, the mighty monarchies of the world.

* ——— *Sic Medus ademit*
Aſſyrio, Medoque tulit moderamina Perſes,
Subjecit Perſen Macedo, ceſſurus et ipſe
Romanis ———

'Aſſyria's empire thus the Mede did ſhake,
'The Perſian next, the pride of Media brake;
'Then Perſia ſunk by Macedonia preſt,
'That, in its turn, fell by Rome at laſt.'——

And no leſs admirable is the wiſdom of God, in fruſtrating and defeating the moſt deep, and deſperate deſigns of hell againſt his poor people. Now, you may ſee the moſt wiſe God going beyond a malicious and ſubtle devil, overturning in a moment the deep laid deſigns, and contrivances of many years, and that at the very birth and point of execution, Eſth. vi. 1. ſnaring the wicked in the works of their own hands; making their own tongues to fall upon them; working out ſuch mar-

* *Claudian, lib. 3. in laudes Stillicones.*

tellous salvations with his own hand, as fills them with astonishment and wonder. Psal. cxxvi. 1. "When the Lord turned back the captivity of Zion, we were like them that "dreamed."

Secondly, As God provides for his own glory, by the sufferings and troubles of his people; so he advanceth their happiness, and greatly promotes their interest thereby.

For, *First*, These troubles are ordered as so many occasions and means to mortify the corruptions that are in their hearts; there are rank weeds springing up in the best soil, which need such winter weather to rot them: And, certainly, if we reckon humility, heavenly-mindedness, contempt of the world, and longing desires after heaven, to be the real interest and advantage of the church; then it is evident, nothing so much promotes their interest, as a suffering condition doth: Adversity kills those corruptions which prosperity bred.

Secondly, By these trials their sincerity is cleared, to the joy and satisfaction of their own hearts; many a doubt and fear, which had long entangled and perplexed them, is removed and answered. When adversity hath given them proof, and trial of their own hearts, one sharp trial wherein God helps us to be faithful, will do more to satisfy our fears, and resolve our doubts, than all the sermons that ever we heard in our lives could do.

Thirdly, These sufferings and trials of the church, are ordained to free it of abundance of hypocrites, which were its reproach, as well as burden, Amos ix. 9, 10. Affliction is a furnace to separate the dross from the more pure and noble gold. Multitudes of hypocrites, like flies in a hot summer, are generated by the church's prosperity; but this winter weather kills them: Many gaudy professors grow within the inclosure of the church, like beautiful flowers in the field, where they stand, during its peace and prosperity, in the pride and bravery of their gifts and professions; but the wind passeth over them, and they are gone, and their places shall know them no more; to allude to that in Psalm ciii. 16. Thunder and lightning is very terrible weather, but exceeding useful to purify and cleanse the air.

Fourthly, The church's sufferings are ordered and sanctified, to endear them to each other. Times of common suffering, are times of reconciliation, and greater endearments among the people of God; never more endeared, than when most persecuted; never more united, than when most scattered, Mal. iii.

17. "Then they that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to an-
"ther." Certainly there is ſomething in our fellowſhip in th
ſame ſufferings, that is endearing and engaging; but there
much more in the diſcoveries that perſecution makes of the ſi
cerity of our hearts, which, it may be, was before entertain
with jealouſy; and there is yet more than all this in the
proofs of the rod, whereby they are humbled for their pri
wantonneſs, and bitterneſs of their ſpirits to each other, a
made to cry, in the ſenſe of theſe tranſgreſſions, as Pſal. lxx
"Remember not againſt us former iniquities."

Laſtly, By theſe troubles and diſtreſſes, they are awakened
their duties, and taught to pray more frequently, ſpiritua
and fervently. Ah! what drowſineſs and formality is apt
creep in upon the beſt hearts, in the time of proſperity; b
when the ſtorm riſes, and the ſea grows turbulent and rag
now they cry, as the diſciples to Chriſt, *Lord, ſave us, w
periſh.* They ſay muſic is ſweeteſt upon the waters; I am ſu
the ſweeteſt melody of prayer is upon the deep waters of af
tion: For theſe, among many other righteous, wiſe, and ho
ends, the Lord permits and orders the perſecutions and diſtre
ſes of his people.

CHAP. III.

*Shews, that it is uſual with God to premoniſh his people of th
proaching trials and ſufferings; with ſome account of the man
ner how, and the reaſon why he ſo forewarns them.*

AS Paul had many clear premonitions and fore-notices of the
ſufferings that ſhould befal him at Jeruſalem, that he might
not be ſurprized by them when they came; ſo it is uſual with
God (though not in ſuch an immediate and extraordinary a man-
ner) to admoniſh the world, and eſpecially his own people, of
great trials and ſufferings before-hand. Amos iii. 7. "Surely
"the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his ſecrets unto
"his ſervants the prophets."

Thus, when he was about to bring the flood upon the world,
he gave one hundred and twenty years warning of it before it
came, Gen. vi. 3. and when he was to deſtroy Sodom, he
ſaith, Gen. xviii. 17. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing
"that I do?" And the like diſcovery he made about the ſame
judgment to Lot, Gen. xix. 12, 13, 14. So when the captivi-
ty of the Jews was nigh at hand, the people had many fore-

warnings of it; God forewarned them both *miniſterially* and *providentially*; he warned them by the prophets, Ezek. iii. 17. "Hear the word of my mouth, and give them warning from "me" And when the time drew nigh to execute the judgment determined upon Jeruſalem, and the temple, how plainly did Chriſt foretel them of it? Luke xix. 43, 44. "Thine "enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compaſs thee "round, and keep thee in on every ſide, and ſhall lay thee e-"ven with the ground, and thy children within thee."

And when the ſtorm was juſt ready to fall, * their own hiſtorian tells us, a voice was heard in the temple, ſaying, *Migremus hinc, Let us go hence.* 'Which voice † Tacitus alſo mentions in his annals, affirming it to be more than a human 'voice, telling them God was departing, and that it was accompanied with a ruſhing noiſe, as of perſons going out. 'Theſe were extraordinary warnings.' The like ſigns have been given to divers other nations, by dreadful *eclipſes* of the heavenly bodies, *portentous comets*, *earthquakes*, and other ſigns of judgment.

Now, though we have no ground to expect ſuch extraordinary warnings, yet we have the moſt apparent and certain ſigns of approaching calamities; after which, if they ſurprize us, the fault muſt lie in our own inexcuſable negligence; for we have a ſtanding rule to govern ourſelves in this matter, and that is this; 'When the ſame ſins are found in one nation, which have 'brought down the wrath of God upon another nation, it is 'an evident ſign of judgment at the door; for God is unchange-'able, juſt, and holy, and will not favour that in one people, 'which he hath puniſhed in another, nor bleſs that in one age, 'which he hath curſed in another.' Upon this very ground it was, that the apoſtle warned the Corinthians, by the example of the Iſraelites, whoſe ſins had ruined them in the wilderneſs, 1 Cor. x. 6. "Now theſe things were our examples, to the in-"tent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted." As if he ſhould ſay, Look upon thoſe dead bodies which are, as it were, caſt up upon the ſame ſcripture-ſhore for a warning to you: Follow not the ſame courſe, leſt you meet in the ſame curſe; if you tread the ſame paths, expect the ſame puniſhment. God is as righteous now, as he was then; he hates, and will puniſh ſin in you, as much as he did in them.

* *Joſephus de bello Jud. lib.* 7. cap. 2.

† *Audita major humana vox excedere Deos, ſimul ingens motus excedentium.* Tacitus, lib. 21.

Let us therefore consider what those provocations were, that hastened the wrath of God upon his own Israel, a people that were nigh and dear unto him; a people upon whom he spent as much of the riches of his patience, as upon any people in the world; that so we may reckon whereabout we are at this day, and what is like to be the lot of this sinful and provoking generation: and we shall find, by the consent of all the prophets, that these sins were the immediate forerunners, and proper causes of their overthrow.

First, The great corruption of God's worship among them kindled his wrath, and hastened their ruin, Psal. cvi. 39, 40, 41, 42. "They were defiled with their own works, and went a "whoring with their own inventions; therefore was the wrath "of God kindled against his own people, insomuch that he ab-"horred his own inheritance, and he gave them into the hand "of the heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them; "their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into "subjection under their hand." They that will not bear the golden yoke of Christ, shall be galled with the iron yoke of men; nothing more provokes the anger of God, than the adulterating of his worship; a man will bear a thousand infirmities in the wife of his bosom, but unfaithfulness in the marriage-covenant breaks his heart. After the manner of men, so abused and grieved, the Lord expresseth himself, Ezek. vi. 9. "I am broken with "their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with "their eyes that go a whoring after their idols." Men cannot invent a surer, and speedier way to their own ruin, than to bring their own inventions into God's worship.

Secondly, Incorrigible obstinacy and impenitency, under gentler strokes, and lesser judgments, makes way for utter ruin and desolation, Amos iv. from the 6th to the 12th verse. Scarcity, mildews, pestilence, and sword, had been tried upon them, but without effect; for the remnant that escaped those judgments, (although plucked as so many brands out of the fire, in which their fellow sinners perished) were not reformed by those gentler and *moderated* judgments.

Thirdly, Stupidity, and senselessness of God's hand, and the tokens of his anger, was a provoking cause, and forerunning of their national desolation; they neither saw the hand of God when it was lifted up, nor humbled themselves under it when it was laid on; the hand of God is then said to be *lifted up*, when the providences of God prepare and posture themselves for our affliction. When the clouds of judgment gather over our heads, and grow blacker and blacker, as theirs did upon them, and do

upon us at this day, but they took no notice of it, Iſa. xxvi. 11. "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee;" and (which is the height of ſtupidity) they all remained ſenſeleſs, and regardleſs, when the hand of God was *laid upon them*. Iſa. xlii. 24, 25. "Who gave Jacob for a ſpoil, and Iſrael to the rob-"bers? Did not the Lord, he againſt whom we have ſinned? "for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obe-"dient to his law. Therefore he hath poured upon them the "fury of his anger, and the ſtrength of battle; and it hath ſet "him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned "him, yet he laid it not to heart."

O prodigious ſottiſhneſs! It was not ſome ſmall drops of God's anger, but *the fury of his anger*; not ſome lighter ſkir-miſh of his judgments with them, but *the ſtrength of battle*: It was not ſome particular ſtroke upon ſingle perſons, or fami-lies, but *it ſet him on fire round about*, a general conflagration; yet all this would not awaken them.

Fourthly, The perſecution of God's faithful miniſters, and people, was another ſin that procured, and a ſign that foretold the deſtruction of their nation. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. "And "the Lord God of their fathers ſent to them by his meſſengers, "riſing up betimes, and ſending; becauſe he had compaſſion "on his people, and on his dwelling-place: but they mocked "the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed "his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his "people, till there was no remedy." There were alſo a num-ber of upright ſouls among them, who deſired to worſhip God according to his own preſcription; but a ſnare was laid for them in Mizpeh, and a net ſpread for them upon Tabor, Hoſ. v. 1. and this haſtened judgment towards them: Mizpeh and Tabor were places lying in the way betwixt Samaria and Jeruſalem, where the true worſhip of God was: and in thoſe places ſpies were ſet by the prieſts to obſerve, and inform againſt them; ſo that it became very hazardous to attend the pure and incorrupt worſhip of God, which quickly haſtened on their ruin.

Fifthly, The removal of godly and uſeful men by death, in more than ordinary haſte, was to them a ſign of deſolation at hand. Iſa. lvii. 1. "The righteous periſheth, and no man lay-"eth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none con-"ſidering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to "come." In this caſe God acts towards his people, as the huſbandman in a catching harveſt doth by his corn; he hurries it with a ſhuffling haſte into the barn, when he ſees a ſtorm coming: or as a careful father with his ſons that are abroad at

ſchool, who ſends his horſe to fetch them home ſpeedily, when he hears the plague is begun in the place. Upon this ground the prophet Micah bewails himſelf, Micah vii. 1. "Wo is me, "for I am as when they have gathered the ſummer-fruits, as the "grape gleanings of the vintage, there is no cluſter to eat; my "ſoul deſired the firſt ripe-fruit." *Q. d.* Alas! alas! what miſerable days are at hand! what miſeries muſt I expect to ſee! The pleaſant cluſters, *(i. e.)* the ſocieties of the ſaints, are gathered away by the hand of death; there are but few that remain, here and there a ſingle ſaint, like grapes after the vintage is done, two or three upon the utmoſt branches.

Sixthly, The general decay of the life and power of godlineſs among them that were left, foreboded deſtruction at the door: this is both a provoking ſin, and a fore-running ſign of national calamity. Hoſea iv. 18. *Their drink is ſowre.* A metaphor lively expreſſing the deadneſs and formality of the people in the worſhip of God. It was like ſowre, or dead drink, which hath loſt its ſpirit and reliſh, and is become flat. Such were their duties; no ſpiritual life, affection, or ſavour in them: they heard, as if they heard not, and prayed, as if they prayed not; the ordinances of God were to them as the ordinances of men, of which the apoſtle ſaith, that they periſh in the uſing.

Seventhly, To conclude; Mutual animoſities, jars, and diviſions, were to them manifeſt ſymptoms of national calamities and deſolations: for then Ephraim envied Judah, and Judah vexed Ephraim, Iſa. xi. 13. Hoſea ix. 7. "The days of viſita-"tion are come, the days of recompence are come, Iſrael ſhall "know it: The prophet is a fool, the ſpiritual man is mad, for "the multitude of thine iniquities, and the great hatred."

When ſuch ſymptoms of God's indignation do appear upon any people, the Lord, by them, as by ſo many glaring meteors, and blazing comets, forewarns the world that his judgments are near, even at the door. Theſe ſigns all men ought to obſerve, and behold with trembling. If you ask, Why doth God uſually give ſuch warnings of his indignation before it comes? The reaſons are,

1. To prevent the execution.
2. To make them more tolerable.
3. To leave the incorrigible inexcuſable.

Firſt, Warning is given, with deſign to prevent the execution of judgments, Amos iv. 12. "Therefore thus will I do "unto thee, O Iſrael; and becauſe I will do this unto thee, "prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael;" *(i. e.)* Prepare thyſelf

to meet me in the way of my judgments, by humiliation and interceſſion, to prevent the execution. And what elſe was the deſign of God in ſending Jonah to that great city Nineveh, but to excite them to repentance for the prevention of their ruin. This Jonah knew to be the Lord's meaning, how poſitive ſoever the words of his commiſſion were; and therefore he declined the meſſage to ſecure his credit; knowing, that if upon warning given they repented, the gracious nature of God would ſoon melt into compaſſion over them, and free-grace would make him appear as a liar; for ſo we muſt expound his words, Jonah iv. 2. "Was not this my ſaying, when I was yet in my country? "Therefore I fled before unto Tarſhiſh: for I knew that thou "art a gracious God, and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great "kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil." *Q. d.* Yea, Lord, I knew before-hand it would come to this; thou ſendeſt me poſitively to denounce thy judgments to Nineveh, mean time deſiring nothing more than that the execution of them might be prevented by their repentance. And thus thy mercy hath expoſed my reputation, in ſaving them from deſtruction.

Secondly, God forewarns his people of judgments, to make them more tolerable when they come: expected evils are nothing ſo heavy, as thoſe that come by ſurprizal; for look, as the long expectation of a mercy makes it leſs ſweet, our thoughts having anticipated and ſucked out much of the ſweetneſs before-hand; ſo the expectation of judgments before they befal us, make them leſs bitter and burdenſome than elſe they would be, the ſoul having inured and accuſtomed itſelf to them, by frequent thoughts, and prepared and made ready itſelf to entertain them, as Paul did in my text. To prevent the diſciples ſurprizal, and offence, at thoſe days of perſecution that were coming upon them, Chriſt foretold them, and gave them fair warning before-hand, John xvi. 4.

Thirdly, He forewarns his people of approaching dangers, to leave the incorrigible wholly inexcuſable, that thoſe who have no ſenſe of ſin, nor care to prevent ruin, might have no cloke for their folly when judgments overtake them. "What wilt "thou ſay when he ſhall puniſh thee?" Jer. xiii. 21, 22. As if he ſhould ſay, What plea, or apology is left thee, after ſo many fair warnings, and timely premonitions? Thou canſt not ſay, I have ſurprized thee, or that thou waſt ruined before thou waſt warned. Thy deſtruction therefore is of thyſelf.

CHAP. IV.

Demonſtrating the excellency of a prepared heart for the work of ſufferings; and what a bleſſed thing it is to be ready to be bound, or to die for Chriſt, as Paul here was.

I *Am ready.*] O bleſſed frame of ſpirit! how hard, but how happy is it to get a heart ſo tempered! Every Chriſtian can ſay, I would be ready, and the Lord make me ready for ſufferings; but few can ſay, I am ready, my heart is prepared and fitted for ſuch a work: yet this example ſhews us it is attainable: and what a bleſſed thing it is to attain it, the following particulars will abundantly convince us.

Firſt, Readineſs for ſufferings will bring the heart of a Chriſtian to an holy reſt and tranquillity, in a ſuffering hour, and prevent that anxiety, perturbation, and diſtraction of mind, which puts the ſinking weight into afflictions. The more cares, fears, and troubles, we have before our ſufferings come, the more calm, quiet, and compoſed we are like to be when our ſufferings are come indeed. It is admirable to conſider with what peace and patience Job entertained his troubles, which conſidering the kinds, degrees, and manner in which they befel him, one would think they ſhould at leaſt have ſtartled and amazed him, and put his ſoul (as gracious and mortified as it was) into great diſorder and confuſion; but you find the contrary: never did the patience of a man triumph at that rate over adverſity; he worſhips God, owns his hand, and reſigns himſelf up to his pleaſure, Job i. 20, 21. And whence was this? Surely had his troubles come by way of ſurprize, he could never have carried it at that rate; but in the days of his peace and proſperity he had prepared for ſuch a day as this, Job iii. 25, 26. "I was not in ſafety, neither had I reſt; yet trouble "came; the thing that I feared (ſaith he) is come upon me." He laid it to heart before it came, and therefore it neither diſtracted, nor brake the heart when it came. In like manner the prophet Habakkuk ſtood upon his watch-tower, (*i. e.*) he made his obſervations by the word upon the probable events of providence, whereby he got a clear foreſight of thoſe troubleſome days that were at hand; which though it made him tremble in himſelf, yet it gave him reſt in the day of evil, Hab. iii. 16, 17, 18. There is a twofold reſt in the day of evil, *viz.*

1. A reſt of deliverance.
2. A reſt of contentation.

It is a singular mercy to find rest in a man's own spirit; to enjoy inward peace, and tranquillity of mind, when there is no rest without; and the way to obtain this, is to foresee, count upon, and make due preparation for troublous times beforehand: evils that come by way of surprizal, are not only amazing, but very frequently destructive evils; it is a sad aggravation to feel a misery, before we fear it; those calamities that find men *secure*, do usually leave them *desperate*: the enemy that comes upon our backs hath a great advantage to ruin us, yet this is the common case of the world. "For man "knoweth not his time, but as the fishes are taken in an evil "net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are "the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth on "them suddenly," Eccl. ix. 12. Thus perished the old world; there was but one Noah provided for the flood, and he only, with his family, was preserved in it: all the rest were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the flood came and swept them all away, Matth. xxiv. 38. Men will not use their foreseeing faculties; but because it is all quiet to-day, they conclude it shall be so to-morrow. Those that are at rest in their habitations, and have got a safe pillow under their heads, are apt to fall asleep in security, and dream pleasantly of continued rest and peace; and loth they are to interrupt their sensual pleasure with melancholy thoughts of changes and sufferings.

Philosophers tell us, that immediately before an earthquake the air is very quiet and serene; and before the great rain falls, the wind is usually still: were the aspect of second causes much more favourable and encouraging than it is; yet there is cause enough, for all that are wise in heart, to fear and tremble, under the consideration of that national guilt which is treasured up, and will certainly produce distress and trouble.

O Christians! look out for days of visitation; prepare for a storm, and provide you an ark, an hiding-place in Christ, and the promises, as ever you expect rest, and peace in your own spirits, when the earth shall be full of tumults, uproars, and desolations.

Secondly, Our preparation for sufferings is an excellent argument of the honesty and sincerity of our hearts, in the matters of religion: he that makes account of sufferings, and is daily at work with his own heart, mortifying its corruptions, weaning its worldly affections, exciting and making ready its suffering-graces, resolving in the strength of God, to take his

lot with Chriſt, where-ever, and howſoever it ſhall fall; this is the man that hath deliberately cloſed with Chriſt upon his own terms, and is like to be the durable and victorious Chriſtian.

As for hypocrites, (Chriſt's ſummer friends) they have either their exceptions againſt the ſeverities of religion, and ſtudy to ſecure to themſelves a retreat from danger, or elſe they ruſh inconſiderately into the profeſſion of Chriſt, never debating the terms which he propoſes to all that will follow him, Mark viii. 34. The neceſſity of a rational and well-adviſed cloſure with Chriſt upon ſuffering and ſelf-denying terms, is by himſelf fully ſet forth in that excellent parable, Luke xiv. 25, 26, 27, 28. There was a great multitude that followed him at that time; Chriſt began to grow in requeſt among them; they flocked from all parts to ſee and hear him; but he foreſaw, that if once a ſharp trial ſhould befal them, it would quickly thin, and diminiſh that great multitude, and reduce them like Gideon's hoſt, into a little handful: and therefore he reſolves to deal candidly and plainly with them; he propounds his terms, and ſets down his conditions, which every one of them muſt ſubſcribe, that will follow him; the ſum of which is this, "Let him deny himſelf, take up his croſs, and "follow me." And to evince the rationality of theſe terms, he argues, from the moſt common and obvious practices of men in their civil affairs: no man, that exerciſeth reaſon, will begin to build an houſe, and lay a large foundation, when he is not provided with a ſtock to carry up the walls, and complete the work: no man, in his wits would engage with a handful of men, againſt a great armed multitude; poſſibly they may intend to *face*, but no man would think they intend to *fight* the enemy, on ſuch a diſadvantage. Juſt ſo ſtands the caſe in our profeſſion of Chriſt; if we really intend to go through with the buſineſs of religion, we muſt ſit down, and compute the coſt and charges of Chriſtianity, think upon the worſt, as well as the beſt, reckon upon reproaches, priſons, and death for his ſake, as well as the eaſier and more pleaſant parts of active obedience; and having ſo done, if then we can be content to run all hazards, and forego all the reſt upon his account, and accordingly manage ourſelves in a day of ſuffering, then we deal ſincerely with Chriſt, and clear ourſelves from the danger of hypocriſy. It is for want of this, that ſo many profeſſors faint, and fall away, in times of temptation, furniſhing the devil with ſo many triumphs over religion, and the more upright profeſſors of it. It was for want of *depth of earth*, (*i. e.*) a deep

conſideration, and well rooted reſolution at firſt, that the ſtony-ground hypocrite ſo quickly withered away, when the ſun of perſecution began to ſhine fervently upon him, Matth. xiii. 5, 6. And doubtleſs it is to prevent this fatal iſſue of our profeſſion, that God makes ſuch deep wounds by conviction upon his peoples hearts at firſt; it is for our eſtabliſhment in future trials, and ſufferings, that he ſo diſtreſſes, and humbles them; that he makes ſin ſo bitter and burdenſome to them; as well knowing that all this is no more than needs, to prevent their returning again to ſin, in the times of their temptation.

O profeſſor! if thou be one that art come to Chriſt in this way, and haſt thus deliberately cloſed with him; if thou haſt as well bethought thyſelf of bearing his croſs, as of wearing his crown; thou haſt then a fair evidence of the uprightneſs of thy heart, than which, the world affords not a ſweeter comfort.

Thirdly, The advantage of preparation for ſufferings lies in this that it prevents, and cuts off the ſcandal and offence of the croſs, with reſpect both to ourſelves, and others.

Firſt, It prevents our own offence at ſufferings; and by Chriſt's own teſtimony, that ſoul is bleſſed, that is not offended in him, Matth. xi. 6. Among the multitudes of profeſſors, few are found that are no way offended at ſuffering for Chriſt; they expected much peace, honour, and proſperity in the ways of religion, but finding their expectations fruſtrated, and their carnal intereſt rather expoſed, than ſecured by their profeſſion of Chriſt, they go back like thoſe John vi. 66. and walk no more with him. And it is very remarkable, that Chriſt dates the offence that men ſhall take at him, from the firſt appearance of ſuffering, Matth. xxiv. 8, 9. "All theſe are the beginnings of ſorrows, and then ſhall many be offended." Sorrows and apoſtacies commence together.

But, reader, if thou be one that makeſt it thy buſineſs to foreſee, and prepare for an evil day, thou wilt have as good thoughts of Chriſt, and his ways at the loweſt ebb, as ever thou hadſt in the greateſt flouriſh, and time of proſperity. "Great peace (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) have they that love thy law, and nothing ſhall offend them." O happy ſoul! whom no troubles, reproaches, or ſufferings, are able to offend! thou mayeſt meet with priſons, death, baniſhments, yea, but none of theſe things ſhall offend, or ſtumble thee, but thou ſhalt peaceably, and ſafely paſs over them, becauſe they are no more than thou expecteſt, and provideſt for.

Secondly, And by this means thou wilt alſo prevent the offence, and ſcandals of *others* at the ways of religion. It is a ſad and dangerous thing to be an occaſion of ſtumbling, either to the weak, or to the wicked. "Woe to the world becauſe of "offences, for it muſt needs be that offences come; but woe "to that man by whom the offence cometh," Matth. xviii. 7. The apoſtacies and ſinful compliances of ungrounded profeſſors, and weak Chriſtians, in times of temptation, are the woful occaſions of prejudicing others againſt religion, and ſhedding the blood of ſouls. Ah! it were much better never to be in the ways of profeſſion, than to be there only as a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence to others: but all this miſchief will be prevented, by thy ſerious expectation of, and proviſion for the evil day.

Fourthly, A fourth excellency of preparation for ſufferings lies in this, that it hath a tendency to convince, and awaken the drowſy world. O! if the Lord's people would but engage in this work in earneſt, and live as people that are providing for a ſtorm, and reſolve, in the ſtrength of God, to run all hazards and hardſhips for Chriſt, I am perſuaded it would be of more uſe, to ſtartle, and convince the world, than all the ſermons that ever they heard: for here is that which daſhes and cuts the throat of all our labours. We preach up ſelf-denial, and contempt of life, and liberty for Chriſt: now though they hear us preach the neceſſity, and excellency of theſe things, and hear you profeſs them as your principles; yet when they look upon the lives of profeſſors in times of danger, and find no proportion betwixt profeſſion and practice; when they ſee us cling to the world, and are as loth to give it up as others; when they obſerve priſons and ſufferings affright and terrify us as much as thoſe that make no profeſſion; when they ſee us ſtart, like hares, at every ſound, and that we live not looſe from the world, as men prepared to let it go and give it up for Chriſt: why then they conclude that we dare not truſt our own principles, when it comes to the puſh. And how can they be perſuaded to believe that which they think we ourſelves do not really believe, although we perſuade them to believe it!

My friends, the world hath *eyes* to ſee what you can *do*, as well as *ears* to hear what you can *ſay*: and as long as they ſee you do no more than others, you may talk your hearts out ere they will believe your way is better than others.

But now when perſecution ariſeth, did they ſee you providing yourſelves for it, and putting on your harneſs to enter the liſts, carry your deareſt enjoyments in your hands, and put on

the ſhoe of preparation, to follow the Lord through the roughest ways of ſufferings; this would convince to purpoſe, and preach the excellency of Chriſt, the vanity of the creature, the rationality and certainty of Chriſtian principles, in a more intelligible, and rouzing dialect to them, than all our cheap, and eaſy commendations of them did. And hence it is, that Noah was ſaid to condemn the world, Heb. xi. 7. "By faith "Noah being warned of God, of things not ſeen as yet," *(i. e.)* of the deluge that was coming, though no appearance of it yet, the heavens being as clear as ever; yet believing the threatning, "He was moved with fear." The fear of God, an effect of his faith in the word of God, *moved (i. e.)* impelled him to his duty; ſet him about his preparation-work to provide an *ark*, and this was it by which he *condemned the world*, left them excuſeleſs. For they not only heard of an approaching flood by his miniſtry, but now ſaw he himſelf believed what he preached, by his daily preparations againſt it came. O conſider this, how much it would tend to the world's conviction; now they will ſee that you are in good earneſt, and that there is a reality in godlineſs: this will induce them to ſearch into the matter more than ever, and remove thoſe prejudices they have taken up againſt the good ways of God, as if they were but *phantaſms* and conceits

5 In the next place, this foreſight and preparation, muſt needs be an excellent thing, becauſe the Spirit of God every where ſets an honourable character upon it, and always mentions ſuch perſons with ſome ſingular commendation and reſpect. Theſe only were wiſe men in the judgment of God, and all the reſt (what great politicians ſoever they are famed to be among men) are accounted fools, Prov. xxii. 3. Eccleſ. ii. 14. "The wiſe man's eyes are in his head;" that is, he is a foreſeeing man; "but the fool goes on, and is puniſhed:" Ruſhes on without conſideration, ſuſpecting no danger that he at preſent ſees not, and ſo ſmarts for his folly. Beloved there are *ſigns of the times*, as well as of the weather, Mat. xvi. 3. You may ſee the clouds of judgment gathering, before the ſtorm falls upon you. And this is the meaning of Zeph. ii. 1, 2. "Gather yourſelves together, before the decree bring forth, "and the day paſs as the chaff." Where there is a *conception* of judgment there will be a *birth*, unleſs the reformations and prayers of the ſaints cauſe it to miſcarry. But it requires wiſdom to diſcern this; they muſt be men of much obſervation, that can deſcry it at a great diſtance; yet this may be done, by conſidering what God hath done in like caſes in former ages,

when nations have been guilty of the ſame ſins as now they are: For God is as juſt now as then, and hates ſin as much as ever he did; and partly by attending to things *preſent*, to what fulneſs, and maturity, the ſins of a nation are grown, Joel iii. 16. or what beginnings of judgment are already upon a people, as harbingers, and forerunners of more at hand. Luke iii. 30, 31. 1 Sam. ii. 12. Or what is the univerſal vote, and cry of God's miniſters, who are his watchmen to foreſee danger, Ezek. iii. 17. and his trumpeters to diſcover it, Numb. x. 8. And when theſe have one mouth given them, certainly there is much in it, Luke i. 70. Or, laſtly, by pondering thoſe ſcripture-prophecies that yet remain to be fulfilled. They muſt all go out their times, and accompliſh their full number of years and months; but certainly they ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſons.

By attending to theſe things, a Chriſtian may give a near gueſs at the judgments that are approaching a nation, and ſo order himſelf accordingly. Eccleſ. viii. 5. "A wiſe man's "heart diſcerns both time and judgment." And this is (even in the judgment of God) a choice point of wiſdom; whereas, on the contrary, heedleſs, and careleſs ones, that regard not theſe things, are branded for fools, and upbraided with more brutiſhneſs than the beaſts of the field, or fowls of the air. Matth. xvi. 3. Jer. viii. 7. "The ſtork in the heavens, the ſwal- "low, turtle, and crane," obſerve their ſeaſons of departing, and returning upon the approach of the *winter* and *ſpring*, and that by a natural inſtinct, whereby they prolong their lives, which elſe muſt periſh. But though God hath made man wiſer than the fowls of the air, and beaſts of the earth, which by inſtinct will quit colder climates, or run to the hedges when winter, or ſtorms approach; yet the heavens may be aſtoniſhed at this, to ſee nature caſt by ſin ſo far below itſelf; and that in reaſonable creatures.

But now, if this be foreſeen, then there is a ſingular advantage in a man's hand, either to uſe the means of preventing thoſe approaching calamities, Zeph. ii. 3. or if it cannot be prevented, yet to take ſanctuary in Chriſt, Mic. v. 5. to run to the promiſes and attributes, Iſa. xxiv. 21. and ſo have a good roof over his head while the ſtorm falls and the weather is tempeſtuous abroad. And therefore certainly this preparation is an excellent thing. Whatever the Spirit of God ſpeaks in the commendation of foreſeeing evils, is with reſpect to this duty of preparing for them; for foreſight of evils without preparation, rather increaſes, than diminiſhes the miſery.

6. A ſixth excellency of preparation lies in the influence that it hath into a Chriſtian's ſtability in the evil day. You cannot but know that your ſtability in that *critical hour* of temptation, is a choice and ſingular mercy, inaſmuch as all you are worth in the other world depends upon your ſtanding then. Rev. xxi. 7, 8. Rom. ii. 6, 7. Luke xxii. 27. neither can you be ignorant how much you are like to be tried, and put to it then, whether you reſpect the enemy that engages you, Eph. vi. 12. or your own weakneſs, who have been ſo often foiled in leſſer trials, Jer. xii. 5. All the grace you have will be little enough to keep the field and bear you up from ſinking; and therefore it cannot but be a bleſſed thing, to be able to ſtand, and cope with the greateſt difficulties, in ſuch a time of trial as that will be. Now he that expects to do this, muſt "put on the whole armour of God." See Epheſ. vi. 12, 13, 14. There is no expectation of ſtanding in the evil day, except *your foot be ſhod*, that is your wills prepared, with the *preparation of the goſpel of peace*.

It is true, that our ability to ſtand, is not from our own inherent grace; "For by his ſtrength ſhall no man prevail," 1 Sam. ii. 9. And yet it is as true, that without grace, both inherent in us, and excited and prepared for a ſtorm, we cannot expect to ſtand: For theſe two, grace inherent in us, and grace exciting and aſſiſting without are not *oppoſed* but, *co-ordinated*. Grace in us, is the weapon by which our enemy falls; but then that weapon muſt be managed by the hand of the Spirit.——Well, then, look upon this as a choice mercy, which tends ſo much to your ſtability.

7. A ſeventh excellency of a prepared heart, is that it is a very high teſtification of our love to Jeſus Chriſt, when we thus ſhew our willingneſs to take our lot with, him and follow him where-ever he goes. What an high expreſſion of love was that of Ruth to her mother Naomi? "I will not go back, but "where thou lodgeſt I will lodge, and where thou goeſt I will "go." It is excellent when a ſoul can ſay to Chriſt, as Ittai to David, 2 Sam. xv. 21. "Surely in what place my Lord the "king ſhall be, whether in death, or in life, even there alſo "will thy ſervant be." This is love indeed, to cleave to him in a time of ſuch diſtreſſes and dangers. This is "love "which the waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown," Cant. viii. 7. *Probatio amoris, eſt exhibitio operis*: If you love Chriſt indeed, ſhew your love by ſome fruits of it; and ſurely this is a very choice fruit, and proof of it. There are many that profeſs a great deal of love to Chriſt, but when it comes to

this touch-ſtone, it appears falſe and counterfeit; but a fleſh flouriſh, when no danger is near. But that ſoul which buckles on the ſhoe of preparation, to follow him through thorns and briars, and over the rocks and mountains of difficulties and troubles, loves him indeed, Jer. ii. 2, 3. Beloved, it is one of the choiceſt diſcoveries of your love to your maſter Chriſt, yea, it is ſuch a teſtification of love to him, as angels are not capable of. They ſhew their love by their readineſs to do his will, in the execution of which they fly as with wings, Ezek. i. 24. but you only have the happineſs of teſtifying your love by your readineſs to ſuffer for him, and is not this excellent?

8. When the heart is prepared for the worſt ſufferings, it is an argument that your will is ſubdued to the will of God; for till this be done, in a good meaſure, you cannot ſtand ready to ſuffer for him. But now, to have the will ſubdued by grace to the will of God, is a very choice, and excellent frame indeed; for in this the main power of grace lieth: Look in what faculty the chief reſidence and ſtrength of ſin was, in the ſame chief reſidence the power of grace, after converſion, is alſo: Now it is in the will, that the ſtrength and power of ſin (before converſion) lay. See John v. 40. Pſalm lxxxi. 11. Jer. xliv. 16, 17. And indeed it was the devil's ſtrong hold, which, in the day of Chriſt's power, he ſtorms and reduces to his obedience, Pſal. cx. 3. O what a bleſſed thing is this! The will rules the man, it hath the empire of the whole man; it commands the faculties of the ſoul, *imperio politico*; and it commands the members of the body, *imperio deſpotico*. Now to have Chriſt and grace rule that which rules and commands your inner and outer man too, is no ſmall mercy; and a better evidence that it is ſo, cannot be given than this, that you ſtand ready, or do ſeriouſly prepare yourſelves to ſuffer the hardeſt things for Chriſt: If your will can like that work, it is an argument grace hath conquered and ſubdued your wills indeed.

9. This preparation of heart to ſufferings, is an excellent thing, becauſe God is ſo abundantly pleaſed with it, that he often excuſes them from ſufferings in whom he finds it, and accepts it, as if the ſervice had been actually done. So Abraham, Gen. xxii. 12. he was ready to offer up his Iſaac's life to God; but God ſeeing his ſervant's heart really prepared, and ready for that difficult ſervice, and high point of ſelf-denial, provided himſelf another ſacrifice, inſtead of Iſaac. Abraham ſhall have his ſon Iſaac back again, and that with advantage; for

he hath with him not only a choice experiment of his love to God, but God's high approbation of him, and acceptation of his offering. It was all one, in respect of divine acceptance, as if he had been slain; and so the scripture represents it, Jam. ii. 21. And in this sense that promise is often made good to God's people who stand ready to give up their Isaacs, their lives, liberties, and dearest enjoyments, to the Lord; "He that "will lose his life for my name's sake, shall save it," Luke ix. 24.

Now what a blessed thing is this! you may this way have the crown of martyrdom, and yet not shed one drop of blood for Christ actually. Ah! how kindly doth God accept it at his poor creatures hands, when he sees how willing they are to serve him with their best enjoyments! "It is well (saith he to "David) that it was in thy heart," 1 Kings viii. 18.

10. And then, lastly, to add no more, it is beyond controversy an excellent and blessed thing; because should such a Christian, after all his pains and preparations, be over-borne, and fall by temptation: yet this preparation of his heart excuses his fall, from those aggravations that are upon the falls of others, and will give him both *support* under such a condition, and *encouragement* to hope for a speedy recovery out of it. Ah! it is no small comfort, when a poor soul, that hath been over-borne by temptation, can come to God, and say, 'Lord, 'thou knowest that this was not a wilful departure from my 'duty, but contrary to the bent and resolutions of my heart; 'thou sawest my diligence before-hand to prepare for it; thou 'sawest my fears and tremblings of heart about it: O Lord, 'forgive, O Lord, recover thy servant wash away this spot, it 'is one of the spots of thy children, an infirmity, not a rebel-'lion:' This may much stay the soul.

Surely, in this case, thou hast many grounds of comfort that another wants; for thy sin being but an infirmity, (1.) It is that which is common to all saints, Psal. ciii. 11, 12, 13, 14. (2.) God hath mercy and pardons for such sins as these, else woe to the holiest soul, Psal. cxxx. 3, 4. Solomon, upon this ground, pleads for mercy for them that prepared their hearts, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. And God hath laid in sweet grounds of encouragement for such souls, Numb. xv. 27, 28. Heb. v. 2. How tenderly doth Christ deal with his disciples under this kind of sin, Matth. xxvi. 41. and though they forsook him for a time, yet he received them again; though they fled from him, yet they all returned again and appeared boldly for Christ af-

terwards, and sealed their confession of him with their blood. And that which recovered them again was this, that their fall and departure was contrary to the resolution, and standing frame, and bent of their hearts; for they resolved all to cleave to him to the death, Matth. xxvi. 35. whereas those that engaged in a profession of him inconsiderately, and never resolved, nor prepared for the worst, fell off from him, and never returned any more, John vi. 66. So then, upon the whole, you cannot but grant, that it is a very blessed and excellent thing to prepare thus for the greatest suffering that can befal us for Christ. We come next to shew wherein it lies.

CHAP. V.

Evincing the necessity of a sound, and real work of grace upon the heart, to fit a man for suffering for Christ.

HAving shewed you that God doth sometimes put his dearest people upon very hard services for him, and what an excellent thing it is to prepare ourselves to obey the call of God to them: In the next place I come to shew you, wherein this *preparation*, or *readiness* for suffering consists, and how many things concur and contribute their assistance to this work.

Now there is a twofold *preparation* or *readiness* for suffering; the one is *habitual*, the other *actual*: That *habitual readiness* is nothing else but the *inclination* of a soul to suffer any thing for Christ; which *inclination* ariseth from the principles of grace infused into the soul: But then as fire, though it have a natural inclination to ascend, yet may be violently depressed and hindered, that it cannot ascend actually, so may it be in this case; and therefore, before a man can be fitted for sufferings, as Paul was, there must, to this habitual, be superadded an *actual readiness*, which is nothing else but the rousing of grace out of the sleepy and dull habits, and awakening it to its work in a time of need: as the lion is said to lash himself with his tail, to rouze up his courage before he fight. The former is a *remote* power, the latter a *proxim* and immediate power. I must handle the former in this chapter, and you are to know that *it consisteth in a sound and real work of grace or conversion wrought upon the soul*; without which,

I ſhall make it evidently appear to you, that no man can be fit or ready to ſuffer as a Chriſt.

Whatever ſtock of natural courage, moral principles, or common gifts of the Spirit be lodged in any man's breaſt, yet all this (without ſpecial grace) can never fit him to ſuffer for Chriſt. And had not this work been really and ſoundly wrought upon the heart of this bleſſed man, as indeed it was, Acts ix. 3, 4, 5. he had quickly fainted under his ſufferings: and ſo will every ſoul ſooner or later do, that ſuffers not upon the ſame principles he did.

1. For firſt, No man can ſuffer for Chriſt until he be able to deny himſelf. See Matth. xvi. 24. Self-denial goes in order of nature before ſufferings. Beloved, in a ſuffering hour, the intereſt of Chriſt and ſelf meet, like two men upon a narrow bridge, one muſt of neceſſity go back, or the other cannot paſs on: If you cannot now deny *ſelf* you muſt deny *Chriſt*. The yoke and dominion of *ſelf* muſt be *caſt off*, or elſe Chriſt's yoke and burden cannot be taken on.

It is confeſſed that ſelf may not only *conſiſt with*, but be a *motive* to ſome kind of ſufferings: Ambition and applauſe may carry a man far this way; pride is a *ſalamander* that it ſeems can live in the flames of martyrdom, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. But to be a *ſervant* to ſelf and a true *ſufferer* for Chriſt is incompatible. Self may make you the *devil's martyrs*, but grace only can make you *Chriſt's martyrs*. So that let a man be ſeemingly carried for a while with never ſo high a tide of zeal for Chriſt, yet if ſelf be the ſpring that feeds it, thoſe ſelf-ends, like ſo many little *ditches* joined to the bank of a river, will ſo ſuck and draw away the water into themſelves, that the lofty ſtream will ſink and come to nothing ere it have ran far: So then, of neceſſity, ſelf muſt be dethroned in the hearts of Chriſt's ſuffering ſervants.

But now it is real grace only that depoſes ſelf, and ſubjects its intereſt to Chriſt's; for ſanctification is nothing elſe but *the dethroning of exalted ſelf, and the ſetting up of Chriſt's intereſt above it in the ſoul*. This is it that alters the property of all a man hath, and ſuperſcribes them with a new title, *Holineſs to the Lord*, Iſa. xxiii. 18. Zech. xiv. 20, 21. Thenceforth a man looks at himſelf as none of his own, but paſt into another's right, 1 Cor. vi. 19.; and that he muſt neither *live*, nor *act ultimately* for himſelf, but for Chriſt, Rom. xiv. 7. Heb. xiii. 7, 8. Phil. i. 20. He is no more as a *proprietor*, but a ſteward of all he hath; and ſo holds upon theſe terms, to lay

it out, or lay it down, as may beſt ſerve his Maſter's ends and glory.

All that he is or hath, is by grace ſubordinated to Chriſt and if once *ſubordinated*, then no more *oppoſed* to him, *ſubordinata non pugnant*. This is it that makes him ſay, I care not what becomes of me or mine, ſo Chriſt may be glorified, "Let "Chriſt be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or "death," Phil. i. 20.

By converſion Chriſt enters the ſoul, as an army doth an enemy's garriſon by ſtorm, and when he is poſ-
2 *Cor.* x. 5. ſeſſed of it by grace, he preſently, divides the whole ſpoil of ſelf betwixt himſelf and his church. This is the firſt thing that evinces the neceſſity of work of grace to prepare the heart for ſufferings.

2. And then in the next place, it is as evident that a man can never be fit to ſuffer hard things for Chriſt, until his ſpirit be enlarged, raiſed, and ennobled ſo that he be able to deſpiſe dangers, and look all difficulties in the face. That low and *private* ſpirit muſt be removed, and a *public* ſpirit, muſt poſſeſs him. If a man be of a feeble and effeminate ſpirit, every petty danger will daunt and ſink him; delicacy and tenderneſs is as unſuitable to a Chriſtian as to a ſoldier, 2 Tim. ii. 3. They that mean to enter into the kingdom of God, muſt reſolve to make their way through that brake of troubles betwixt them and it, 2 Tim. iii. 12. They that will be crowned with victory, muſt ſtand to it, and play the men, as that word imports, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Look over all the ſacred and human hiſtories, and ſee if you can find a man that ever honoured Chriſt by ſuffering, that was not of a raiſed and noble ſpirit, and, in ſome meaſure, able to contemn, both the allurements and threats of men. So thoſe three noble Jews, Dan. iii. 16, 17. So Moſes, Heb. xi. 27. And ſo our apoſtle, Acts xx. 24. And the ſame heroic and brave ſpirit was found in the ſucceeding ages amongſt the witneſſes of Chriſt. When Valence the emperor endeavoured to draw Baſil from the faith by offers of preferment, 'offer theſe things (ſaith he) to children;' when he threatened him with torments, 'threaten theſe things (ſaith he) 'to your purple gallants that live delicately.' And the ſame Baſil relating the ſtory of the forty martyrs, ſaith, That when great honours and preferments were offered them to draw them from Chriſt, their anſwer was, 'Why offer you theſe ſmall 'things of the world to us, (O emperor) when you know the 'whole world is contemned by us!' So Luther, money could not tempt him, nor the fear of man daunt him. 'Let me

'(ſaid he in his letter to Staupicius) be accounted proud, 'covetous, a murderer, guilty of all vices, rather than of 'wicked ſilence and cowardiſe in the cauſe of Chriſt.' Thus you ſee to what an height, and holy greatneſs, the ſpirits of ſuffering ſaints in all ages have been raiſed.

But now it is grace that thus raiſes the ſpirits of men above all the ſmiles and honours, frowns and fears of men; and no other principle but grace can do it. There is indeed a *natural ſtoutneſs* and generoſity in ſome, which may carry them far, as it is ſaid of Alexander, that when any great danger approached him, his courage would riſe, and he would ſay, *Jam periculum par animo Alexandri*; Here is a danger fit for Alexander to encounter: So Pompey, when diſſuaded from a dangerous voyage anſwered, *Neceſſe eſt ut eam, non ut vivam.* 'It is ne-'ceſſary that I go, not that I live.' But this being fed only by a natural ſpring, can carry a man no higher than nature, and will flag at laſt. If applauſe, and the obſervation of the world ſupply it not, it quickly ebbs and fails.

But as grace raiſes men much higher; ſo it maintains it even when there is nothing to encourage without; when forſaken of all creatures, and viſible ſupports, 2 Tim. iv. 10. And this it doth three ways; (1.) By giving him that hath it a view of far greater things, which ſhrinks up all temporary things, and makes them appear but trifles and ſmall matters, Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 18. By grace a man riſes with Chriſt, Col. iii. 1. It ſets him upon his high places, and thence he looks down upon things below, as very poor and inconſiderable. The great cities of Campania ſeem but little ſpots to them that ſtand on the top of the Alps. (2.) By teaching him to value and meaſure all things by another rule than he was wont to do. He did once meaſure life, liberty, riches, honours, by ſenſe and time; and then they ſeemed great things, and it was hard to deny them, or thus to ſlight them; but now he values and meaſures all by faith and eternity; and eſteems nothing great and excellent, but what hath a reference to the glory of God, and an influence into eternity. (3.) Grace raiſes and enobles the ſpirit thus, becauſe it is the divine nature; it is the Spirit of Chriſt infuſed into a poor worm, which makes a ſtrange alteration on him, transforms him into another manner of perſon; as much difference betwixt his ſpirit now and what it was, as betwixt the ſpirit of a child that is filled with ſmall matters, and taken up with toys; and of a grave *ſtateſman*, that is daily employed about the grand affairs of a kingdom.

3. A man can never ſuffer as a Chriſtian, till his will be ſubjected to the will of God. He that ſuffers *involuntarily*, and out of neceſſity, not out of choice, ſhall neither have acceptance nor reward from God. Of neceſſity the will muſt be ſubjected; a man can never ſay, *Thy will be done*, till he can firſt ſay, *Not my will.*

But it is grace only that thus conquers and ſubjects the will of man to God's, Pſal. cx. 3. This is that which exalts God's authority in the ſoul, and makes the heart to ſtoop and tremble at his commands. It is this which makes our will to write its *fiat* at the foot of every command, and its *placet* under every order it receives from God. No ſooner was grace entered into the ſoul of Paul, but preſently he cries out, "Lord, "what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6. The will is to the ſoul what the wheels are to the chariot; and grace is to the will what oil is to thoſe wheels. When we receive the Spirit of grace, we are ſaid to *receive an unction from the Holy One*, 1 John ii. 20. And then the ſoul is made as the chariots of Aminadab, Cant. vi. 12. *Non tardat uncta rota*, it runs freely after the Lord, and chearfully addreſſeth itſelf to every ſervice.

4. A man can never ſuffer as a Chriſtian, until his heart be compoſed, fixed, and determinated to follow the Lord thro' all hazards and difficulties. As long as a man is heſitating and unreſolved what to do, whether to go forward, or turn back again to the proſperous world, when a man is at ſuch a *pauſe*, and ſtand in his way, he is very unfit for ſufferings. All ſuch diviſions do both *weaken* the ſoul, and *ſtrengthen* the temptation: The devil's work is more than half done to his hand in ſuch a ſoul, and he is now as unfit to endure hardſhip for Chriſt, as a ſhip is to ride out a ſtorm, that hath neither cable, anchor, nor ballaſt, to hold and ſettle it, but lies at the mercy of every wave, Jam. i. 8. "The double-minded "man is unſtable in all his ways." But it is grace, and nothing beſides it, that brings the heart to a fixed reſolution and ſettlement to follow the Lord, it is grace that *eſtabliſhes the heart*, Heb. xiii. 9. and unites it to fear the name of God, Pſal. lxxxvi. 11. This gathers all the ſtreams into one channel, and then it runs with much ſtrength, and ſweeps away all obſtacles before it. So that look as it is with a wicked man that hath ſold himſelf to do wickedly, if he be ſet upon any one deſign of ſin, he pours out his whole heart and ſtrength in the proſecution of that deſign, which is the ground of that ſaying, *Liberet me Deus ab homine unius tantum negotii*, let

God deliver me from a man of one only deſign. He will do it to purpoſe: So is it alſo in grace; if the heart be compoſed, fixed, and fully reſolved for God, nothing ſhall then ſtand before him. And herein lies much of a Chriſtian's habitual fitneſs and ability to ſuffer.

5. The neceſſity of ſaving grace in all ſufferers for Chriſt, will farther appear from this conſideration, that he who will run all hazards for Chriſt, had need of a continual ſupply of ſtrength and refreſhment from time to time. He muſt not depend on any thing that is failable; for what ſhall he do then, when that ſtock is ſpent, and he hath no proviſion left to live upon? Now all natural qualifications, yea, all the common gifts of the Spirit, are failable and ſhort-lived things; they are like a ſweet flower in the boſom, that is an ornament for a little while, but withers preſently: Or like a pond or brook occaſioned by a great fall of rain, which quickly ſinks and dries up, becauſe it is not fed by ſprings in the bottom, as other fountain-waters are; and hence it is they cannot continue and hold out when ſufferings come, Matth. xiii. 21. Becauſe there is no root to nouriſh and ſupport. The hypocrite will not always call upon God, Job xxvii. 10. Though they may keep company with Chriſt a few miles in this dirty way, yet they muſt turn back at laſt, and ſhake hands eternally with him, John vi. 66. Theſe *comets* may ſeem to ſhine for a time among the ſtars, but when that earthly matter is ſpent, they muſt fall and loſe their glory.

But now grace is an everlaſting principle, it hath ſprings in the bottom that never fail. "It ſhall be in him (ſaith Chriſt) "a well of water ſpringing up into eternal life," John iv. 14. The Spirit of God ſupplies it from time to time, as need requires. It hath daily incomes from heaven, 2 Cor. i. 5. Phil. iv. 13. Col. i. 11. So that it is our union with Chriſt the fountain of grace, that is the true ground of our conſtancy and long ſuffering *.

6. And then laſtly, it will appear by this alſo, that there is an abſolute neceſſity of a real change by grace on all that will ſuffer for Chriſt; becauſe although we may engage ourſelves in ſufferings without out it, yet we can never manage our ſufferings like Chriſtians without it. They will neither be honourable or acceptable to God, nor yet beneficial and comfortable to ourſelves or others, except they be performed from this principle of grace: For upon what principle ſoever beſide this any man

* We are only ſo far ſafe as we are united to Chriſt,

is acted in religion, it will either cause him to decline suffe ings for Christ; or, if he be engaged in them, yet he will li tle credit religion by his sufferings. They will either be spoi ed by an ill management, or his own pride will devour t praise and glory of them. I do not deny, but a man that graceless, may suffer many hard things upon the account his profession, and suffer them all in vain, as these scriptur manifest. See 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Gal. iii. 4. And although y may find many sweet promises made to those that suffer f Christ, yet you must consider that those pure and spiritual e and motives, by which men ought to be acted in their suffe ings, are always supposed and implied in all these promises th are made to the external action. And sometimes it is expresse 1 Pet. iv. 16. To suffer [as a Christian] is to suffer from p Christian principles, and in a Christian manner, with *meekne patience, self-denial*, &c.; and this, grace only can enable yo to do: So that by all this, I hope what I have undertaken in th character, *viz.* To evince the necessity of a work of grace t pass upon you, before sufferings for religion come, is perform ed to satisfaction.

CHAP. VI.

Wherein the nature of this work of grace, in which our habitua fitness for suffering lies, is briefly opened, and an account given of the great advantage the gracious person hath for a ny, even the hardest work thereby.

HAving in the former chapter plainly evinced the necessity of saving grace to fit a man for sufferings; it will be expected now that some account be given you of the nature of the work, and how it advantages a man for the discharge of the hardest services in religion: Both which I shall open in this chapter, by a distinct explication of the parts of this description of it.

What saving grace is.

This work of grace, of which I am here to speak, *consists in the real change of the whole man, by the Spirit of God, whereby he is prepared for every good work:* In which brief description, I shall open these four things to you.

1. That it is a change; this is palpably evident, both from scripture and experience, 2 Cor. v. 17. "Old things are past

"away, behold, all things are become new;" and it is so sensible a change, that it is called a *turning from darkness to light*, Acts xxvi. 18. and a new creature formed and brought forth. But to be a little more distinct and particular, there are several other changes that pass upon men, which must not be mistaken for this; and therefore, (1.) It is not a mere change of the judgment from error to truth, from Paganism to Christianity. Such a change Simon Magus had, yet still remained in the gall of bitterness, and fast bound in the bonds of iniquity, Acts viii. 23. (2.) Nor only of a man's practice, from *profaneness* to *civility*: This is common among such as live under the light of the gospel, which breaking into mens consciences, thwarts their lusts and over-awes them with the fears of hell: Which is no more than what the Gentiles had, Rom. ii. 15. (3.) Nor is it a change from mere *morality*, to mere *formality* in religion. Thus *hypocrites* are changed, by the common gifts of the Spirit, illuminating their minds, and slightly touching their affections, Heb. vi. 4, 5. (4.) Nor is it such a change as justification makes, which is relative, and only alters the state and condition, Rom. v. 1, 2. (5.) Lastly, It is not a change of the essence of a man; he remains essentially the same person still. But this change consists in the infusion of new habits of grace into the old faculties; which immediately depose sin from its dominion over the soul, and deliver up the soul into the hands and government of Christ, so that it lives no more to itself, but to Christ. This is that change whereof we speak: And this change (2.) I assert to be real, no fancy, nor delusion; not a groundless conceit, but it is really existent, *extra mentem*, whether you conceit it or not. Indeed the blind world would persuade us it is *supposititious*, and *phantastic*; and that there is no such real difference betwixt one man and another, as we affirm grace makes. And hence it is, that whoever professeth it, is presently branded for a phanatic; and that scripture, Isa. lvi. 5. "Stand by thyself, "I am holier than thou," *&c.* clapt in their teeth, in their absurd and perverse sense of it.

But I shall briefly offer these seven things to your consideration, which will abundantly evince the reality of it, and at once both stop the slanderous mouths of ignorant men, and silence those atheistical surmises, which at any time Satan may inject into the hearts of God's own people touching this matter. And *first*, let it be considered, that the Spirit of God hath represented to us this work of grace, under such names

and notions in ſcripture, as if they had been choſen purpoſely to obviate this calumny. It is called a *creature*, Gal. vi. 15. a *man*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. a *new birth*, John iii. 3. Chriſt formed in us, Gal. iv. 19. All which expreſs its reality, and that it is not a conceited thing. (2.) It appears to be real by the marvellous effects it hath upon a man, turning him both in judgment, will, affections, and practice, quite counter to what he was before. This is evident in that famous inſtance of Paul, Gal. i. 23. which is abundantly atteſted and ſealed by the conſtant experience of all gracious ſouls that are witneſſes of the truth hereof. (3.) A divine and almighty power goes forth to produce and work it; and hence faith is ſaid to be of the operation of God, Col. ii. 12. Yea, that the ſame power which raiſed Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, goes to the production of it, Epheſ. i. 19, 20. And if ſo, how much leſs than blaſphemy is it, to call it a conceit or fancy? Doth God ſet on work his infinite power to beget a fancy, or raiſe an imagination? (4.) Conceits and whimſies abound moſt in men of weak reaſon: Children, and ſuch as are crackt in their underſtandings, have moſt of them: Strength of reaſon baniſhes them, as the ſun doth miſts and vapours: But now the more rational any gracious perſon is, by ſo much the more he is fixed, ſettled, and ſatisfied in the grounds of religion: Yea, there is the higheſt and pureſt reaſon in religion; and when this change is wrought upon men, it is carried on in a rational way, Iſa. i. 18. John xvi. 9. The Spirit over-powers the underſtanding with clear demonſtrations, and ſilences all objections, pleas and pretences to the contrary. (5.) It is a real thing, and gracious ſouls know it to be ſo; elſe ſo many thouſands of the ſaints would never have ſuffered ſo many cruel torments and miſeries, rather than forſake a fancy, and ſo ſave all. They have been ſo well ſatisfied of the reality of that which the world calls a fancy, that they have choſen rather to embrace the ſtake than deny it. The conſtancy of Chriſtians, in cleaving to religion, was common to a *proverb* among the *heathen*; who when they would expreſs the greateſt difficulty, would ſay, 'You may as ſoon turn a Chriſtian 'from Chriſt, as do it.' Surely no wiſe man would ſacrifice his liberty, eſtate, life, and all that is dear, for a conciet. (6.) Its reality appears in its uniformity in all thoſe on whom it is wrought: "They have all obtained like precious faith," 2 Pet. i. 1. "They are all changed into the ſame image," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Three thouſand perſons affected in one and the ſame manner at one ſermon, Acts ii. 37. Could one and the

ſame conceit poſſeſs them all together? Take two Chriſtians that live a thouſand miles diſtant from each other, that never heard of one another, let theſe perſons be examined, and their reports compared, and ſee if they do not ſubſtantially agree, and whether as face anſwers face in the water, ſo their experiences do not anſwer one to the other? Which could never be, if it were a groundleſs conceit. (7.) And laſtly, It is manifeſt it is a reality, and puts a real difference betwixt one and another, becauſe God carries himſelf ſo differently towards them, after their converſion; now he ſmiles, before he frowned; now they are under the promiſes, before they were under the threats and curſes; and what a vaſt difference will he put betwixt the one and the other in that great day? See Matth. xxv. Surely, if theſe nominal Chriſtians did but differ in conceit, not really from others, the righteous Judge of all the earth would not paſs ſuch a different judgment and doom upon them.

By all this you evidently ſee, that grace is a real change, and not a conceited one.

3. We ſay that this real change paſſes upon the whole man: he is changed in *ſoul*, *body*, and *practice*: all things are become new. (1.) This change appears in his ſoul: For by it, (1.) His underſtanding is ſtrangely altered, and receives things in another way than formerly. It did look at Chriſt and things eternal, as uncertain and light matters; the things that are ſeen and preſent, did moſtly affect, and appeared great and excellent: It admired riches and honour, while Chriſt and glory were over-looked and deſpiſed. But now all theſe temporals are eſteemed dung, droſs, vanity, Phil. iii. 8, 11. Rom. viii. 18. And Jeſus Chriſt is now eſteemed "the wiſdom and the "power of God," 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. It did look on the ſaints as deſpicable perſons, but now as the "excellent of the earth," Pſal. xvi. 3. Strictneſs and duty was once eſteemed a needleſs thing, but now the only thing deſirable, Pſal. cxix. 14. "Oh, "ſaith the renewed ſoul, where were mine eyes, that I could "ſee no more excellency in Chriſt, his ways, and people?" (2.) It ſtops not there (as it doth in hypocrites) but paſſes on further, and reduces the will; that ſtrong hold is taken, and delivered up to Chriſt. It did rebel againſt God, and could not be ſubject, but now it ſubmits, Acts ix. 6. "Lord, what "wilt thou have me to do?" In the day of Chriſt's power, he preſents himſelf in all his drawing glory and lovelineſs before the will, and cries to that ſtubborn faculty, "Open to me,

" open to me;" with which word there goes forth an opening and ſubduing power, which the will no ſooner feels, but it ſpontaneouſly moves towards him, and ſaith, " Stand open ye " everlaſting gates, that the King of glory may come in." Henceforth it votes for God, ſubſcribes and ſubmits to his will as its only rule and law; and indeed, it becomes the principal ſeat where grace makes its reſidence; and where, for the moſt part, it is more viſible than in any other faculty. For after a man hath ſearched for it in all other faculties, and cannot diſcern it, yet here he ordinarily finds it; to will is preſent, Rom. vii. 18. (3.) The will being thus gained to Chriſt, love comes in of courſe; it, feeling the power of grace alſo, preſently changeth its object: It ſeizeth not ſo greedily on earthly objects as before, but is ſtrangely cooled and deadned to them, by the appearance of a far greater glory in Jeſus Chriſt; which hath ſo captivated the ſoul, and ſtrongly attracted this affection, that it is now become very remiſs in all its actings towards them; and often (eſpecially at firſt) it is ſo weaned from all things on earth, that the temptation ſeems to lie on the other extreme, even in too great neglect of our lawful employments and comforts. Now Jeſus Chriſt, Cant. i. 3. his ordinances, Pſal. cxix. 97. and his ſaints, 1 John iii. 14. are the only delights, and ſweeteſt companions; he could ſit from morning till night, to hear diſcourſes of Chriſt his beloved, and could live and die in the company of his people, whoſe company is now moſt delightful and ſweet, Pſal. cxix. 63. (4.) The deſires are altered, they pant no more after the duſt of the earth, Pſal. cv. 6. but pant for God, as the " hart after the water-" brooks," Pſal. xlii. 1. Yea, ſo big is the ſoul with them, that it is ſometimes ready to faint, yea, to break with the longing it hath after him, Pſal. cxix. 20. (5.) The thoughts are changed, Pſal. cxix. 113. and the thoughts of God are now moſt precious, Pſal. cxxxix. 17. muſing, when alone, of him; and in its ſolitudes the ſoul entertains itſelf with a delightful feaſt, which its thoughts of God bring in to refreſh it, Pſal. lxiii. 5, 6. (6.) The deſigns and projects of the ſoul are changed; all are now ſwallowed up in one grand deſign, even to approve himſelf to God, and be accepted of him, 2 Cor. v. 9. and if he fail not there, it will not much trouble him, if all his other deſigns ſhould be daſhed. It were eaſy to inſtance in the reſt of the affections, and ſhew how grace ſpreads and diffuſes itſelf into them all, as light in the air, or leaven in the lump; but this may ſuffice, to ſhew how it paſſes upon the whole ſoul, and enters the ſeveral faculties and affections thereof.

And the soul being thus possest for God, the body with all its members is consequently resigned up to him also: For the will hath the empire of the members of the body, as well as of the passions and affections of the soul. These are not any more delivered up to execute the lusts of Satan, but are yielded up to God for his ends and uses, Rom. vi. 19. And thus you have the third thing in the description made out also, that it is an universal, as well as a real change. But then,

4. Lastly, You must know that by this change God prepares a man for choice and excellent services; and this indeed is the main thing designed in this chapter, and is the result and issue of all that hath hitherto been said about this work of grace.

Beloved, can you imagine that God could employ his infinite and glorious power, to produce this new creature in such an excellent nature, it being the master-piece of all his works of wonder wrought upon man, and not aim at some singular use, and excellent end? Every wise agent designs some end; and what God aims at he hath told us, Isa. xliii. 21. Eph. ii. 20. And accordingly he expects singular things from such persons, Matth. v. 47. If God had not aimed at some new service, he need not have made a new creature: the old creature was fit enough for the old use and service it was employed in. But God hath some choice service to be done, wherein he will be glorified. He will have his name glorified, even in this world, by the active and passive obedience of his people. But this being far above all the power of nature, God therefore brings them forth in a new and heavenly nature, endowed with rare supernatural and divine qualities, by which it is fitted and excellently prepared for any service of God, by doing or by suffering, which before, he had no fitness or ability for.

The very make and constitution of this new creature speaks its use and end: As now, if a man look upon a sword or knife, (supposing he had never seen either before) yet, I say, by viewing the shape, and properties of it, he will say, this was made to cut. Even so here, this new creature was formed for some glorious and singular service for God, to which it is exceedingly advantaged, whether God put you upon doing or suffering. If you ask wherein this advantage of the new creature to honour God either way lies; I answer, it principally consists in its *heavenly inclination*, or *natural tendency* to God. This is its great advantage; for, by virtue of this,

1. If God call a man to any duty, there is a *principle* within, closing with the command without, and moving the soul

freely and ſpontaneouſly to duty, Pſal. xxvii. 8. If God ſay, *Seek my face*, ſuch an heart echoes to the call, *Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek:* And this is it which is called, *The writing of God's law in the heart*, Jer. xxxi. 33. and muſt needs be a mighty advantage; for now its work is its delight and wages, Pſal. xix. 11. The command to ſuch a ſoul is not grievous, 1 John v. 3. and by this it is kept from tiring in duty, and being weary of its work. As you ſee what pains children can take at play, how they will run and ſweat, and endure knocks and falls, and take no notice of it; put them upon any manual labour, and they cannot endure half ſo much: When our work is our delight, we never faint nor tire at it. This inclination to God, is to the ſoul, as wings to a bird, or ſails to a ſhip. This carries the ſoul eaſily through every duty. O there is a vaſt difference betwixt a man that *works for wages*, or one whoſe *work is wages to him*. And here you may at once ſee wherein the principal difference betwixt the hypocrite and real Chriſtian lies, in the performance of duty; and alſo have a true account of the reaſon why one perſeveres in his work to the end, when the other flags. Why, here is the true account of both; the one is moved to duty from a natural inclination to it, the other is forced upon it by ſome external motives: For the hypocrite takes not delight in the ſpiritual and inward part of duty, but is ſecretly weary of it, Mal. i. 13. only his ambition and ſelf-ends put him upon it as a taſk. But now the upright heart goes to God as his joy, Pſal. xliii. 4. And ſaith, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God," Pſal. lxxiii. *ult.* When the ſabbath comes, (*that golden ſpot of the week*), oh how he longs to *ſee the beauty of the Lord* in his ordinances! Pſal. xxvii. 4. And when engaged in the worſhip of God, he cannot ſatisfy himſelf in *bodily ſervice*, or to ſerve God *in the oldneſs of the letter*. He knoweth that *this perſuaſion comes not of him that called him*, Gal. v. 7, 8. He labours to engage his heart to approach to God, Jer. xxx. 21. And hence thoſe mountings of heart, and violent ſallies of the deſires heavenward. And thus you ſee one rare advantage to glorify God actively, flowing from the inclination of this new creature.

2. But then, *ſecondly*, hence in like manner hath the ſoul as great an advantage for ſufferings; for this new creature having ſuch a natural tendency to God, will enable the ſoul in which it is, to break its way to God, through all the interpoſing obſtacles and diſcouragements. What are peſecutions, what are reproaches, what are the fears and frowns of ene-

mies, but ſo many blocks thrown in the ſoul's way to keep it from God and duty? And indeed where this principle of grace is wanting, they prove inacceſſible mountains. Graceleſs hearts are ſtalled, and quite diſcouraged by them: but now this tendency of the ſoul to God enables the Chriſtian to break his way through all. You may ſay of him, in ſuch a caſe, as the hiſtorian doth of Hannibal, (who forced a way over the Alps with fire and vinegar), either he will find a way, or make a way; "Shall ſword or famine, or any other creature ſepa-"rate me from Chriſt?" ſaith an upright ſoul. No, no, it will make its way thro' all to him, and that from this tendency of his new nature. You ſee in nature, every thing hath a tendency to its centre; fire will up, do what you can to ſuppreſs it; water will to the ſea; if it meet with dams, yea mountains in its way, if it cannot bear them down, it will creep about ſome other way, and wind and turn to find a paſſage to the ſea. God is the centre of all gracious ſpirits, and grace will carry the ſoul thro' all to him. This is grace, and this is your advantage by it in the moſt difficult part of your work. It will carry you through all; make the hardeſt work eaſy and pleaſant, 2 Cor. xii. 10. And if great ſufferings or temptations interpoſe betwixt you and your God, it will break thro' all, and enable you to withſtand all; as it did Paul in the text, who forced his way not only through the fury of enemies, but alſo through the entreaties and tears of friends.

CHAP. VII.

In which the neceſſity of getting clear evidences of this work of grace in us, in order to our readineſs for ſufferings, is held forth; the nature of that evidence opened; and divers things, that cloud and obſcure it, removed out of the way.

I Have done with *habitual readineſs*, conſiſting in an inwrought work of grace. The following particulars are the things in which our *actual readineſs* lies. And of them that which comes next to be handled, is the getting of clear evidences in our own ſouls, that this work hath been wrought on us: this will exceedingly tend to your ſtrengthening, and comfort, in a ſuffering hour. Bleſſed Paul, who here profeſſeth himſelf ready both for bonds and death, was clear in this point; 2 Tim. i. 12. and iv. 6, 7. And indeed had he been cloudy and dark in this, he could not have ſaid, *I am*

ready. No, no, he had been in an ill case to undertake that journey to Jerusalem: and thou wilt find it a singular advantage in dark and difficult days, to have all clear and right within. Now, for the opening of this, I will shew:

I. What the evidence or manifestation of the work of grace is.

II. How it appears to be of such great advantage to a suffering saint.

III. Prescribe some rules for the obtaining of it.

I. What it is. And, in short, it is nothing else but the *Spirit's shining upon his own work in the hearts of believers, thereby enabling them sensibly to see and feel it to their own satisfaction*. And this is expressed in Scripture under a pleasant variety of metaphors. Sometimes it is called the "shedding "abroad of the love of God, in the heart," Rom. v. 5. Sometimes "the lifting up of the light of God's countenance," Psal. iv. 6. and sometimes it is expressed, without a trope, by Christ's *manifesting himself* to the soul, John xiv. 21.

For the opening of it, I desire you would consider these six things.

1. That it is attainable by believers in this life, and that in a very high degree and measure. Many of the saints have had it in a full measure, 1 Cor. ii. 12. 1 John iii. 24. John xxi. 15.

2. Though it be attainable by believers, yet it is a thing separable from true grace, and many precious souls have gone mourning for the want of it, Isa. l. 10. This was sometimes the case of Heman, David, Job, and multitudes more.

3. During its continuance, it is the sweetest thing in the world. It swallows up all troubles, and doubles all other comforts: it puts more gladness into the heart, than the increase of corn and wine, Psal. iv. 6. *Suavis hora, sed brevis mora; sapit quidem suavissime, sed gustatur rarissime*, Bernard.

4. Both in the continuation and removal of it the Spirit acts *arbitrarily*. No man can say how long he shall walk in this pleasant light, Psal. xxx. 7. "By thy favour thou hast made "my mountain stand strong, thou hidest thy face, and I was "troubled." And when in darkness, none can say how long it will be e'er that sweet light break forth again. God can scatter the cloud unexpectedly in a moment, Cant. iii. 4. "It was but "a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my "soul loveth." There is such an observable difference in David's spirit in some Psalms, as if one man had written the beginning and another the end of them.

5. Though God can quickly remove the darkness and doubts

of a soul, yet ordinarily the saints find it a very hard and difficult thing to obtain and preserve the evidences of their graces. Such is the darkness, deadness, and deceitfulness of the heart; so much unevenness and inconstancy in their practice, so many counterfeits of grace, and so many wiles and devices of Satan to rob them of their peace, that few (in comparison) live in a constant and quiet fruition of it.

6. Notwithstanding all these things, which increase the difficulty; yet God hath afforded his people a sure light, and sufficient means, in the diligent use and improvement whereof they may attain a certainty of the work of grace in them. And there is a threefold light by which it may most clearly and infallibly be discovered.

1. Scripture-light, which is able to discover the secrets of a man's heart to him; and is therefore compared to the Anatomizer's knife, Heb. iv. 12.

2. The innate light of grace itself; or, if you will, the light of experience, 1 John v. 10. It hath some properties and operations which are as essential, necessary, and inseparable, as heat is to the fire, and may be as sensibly felt and perceived by the soul, Psal. cxix. 20.

3. The light of the Spirit, superadded to both the former, which is sometimes called its *earnest*, sometimes its *seal*. The Spirit doth but *plant* the *habits*, *excite* and draw forth the *acts*, and also *shine* upon his own work, that the soul may see it; and that sometimes with such a degree of light as only begets peace, and quiets the heart, though it do not fully conquer all the doubts of it. And at other times the heart is irradiated with so clear a beam of light, that it is able to draw forth a triumphant conclusion, and say, Now I know the things that are freely given me of God: I believe, and am sure,

And so much briefly for the opening of the nature of this evidence.

II. I shall shew you the advantage of it to a suffering saint, in order to the right management of a suffering condition.

And this will appear by the consideration of five things.

1. You will readily grant, that the Christian's love to God hath a mighty influence into all his sufferings for God. This grace of *love* enables him victoriously to break through all difficulties and discouragements. "The floods cannot drown it, nor "the waters quench it," Cant. viii. 6, 7. It facilitates the greatest hardships, 1 John v. 3. And whatever a man suffers,

if it be not from this principle, it is neither acceptable to God nor available to himself, 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

But now nothing more inflames and quickens the Christian's love to God, than the knowledge of his interest in him, and the sensible perception and taste of his love to the soul. Our love to God is but a reflection of his own love; and the more powerful the stroke of the direct beam is, the more is that of the reflex beam also. Never doth that *flame* of Jah burn with a more vehement heat, than when the soul hath the most clear manifestations of its interest in Christ and his benefits, Luke vii. 47.

2. It must needs be of singular use to a suffering saint, because it takes out the sinking weight of affliction. That which sinks and breaks the spirit, is the conjunction and meeting of inward and outward troubles together; then if the Lord do not strangely and extraordinarily support the soul, it is wrecht and overwhelmed, as the ship in which Paul sailed was, when it fell into a place where two seas met, Acts xxvii. 41. O how tempestuous a sea doth that soul sail in, that hath fightings *without*, and fears *within!* how must that poor Christian's heart tremble and meditate terror, that when he retires from troubles without, for some comfort and support within, shall find a sad *addition* to his troubles from whence he expected relief against them! hence it was that Jeremy so earnestly deprecates such a misery, "Be not thou a terror to me, thou art "my hope in the day of evil," Jer. xvii. 17. This is prevented by this means: if a man have a clear breast, and all be quiet within, he is like one that hath a good roof over his head when the storm falls. "We glory in tribulation, because the "love of God is shed abroad in our hearts," Rom. v. 3, 5.

3. It is a fountain of joy and comfort in the darkest and saddest hour. Hence the glorious triumphs of saints in their afflictions, Rom. v. 5. And in the Christian's joy in the Lord, lies much of his strength for sufferings, Neh. viii. 10. If once the spirit droop and sink, the man is in a bad ease to suffer: Holy joy, is the oil that makes the chariot-wheels of the soul free to follow the Lord, *Non tardat uncta rota.* To suffer with joyfulness for Christ is a qualification that God's eye is much upon in his suffering servants, Col. i. 11. How did the famous worthies that went before us magnify Christ, and glorify religion by the holy triumphs of their faith and joy under tribulation! one kiss'd the *apparitor* that brought him news of his condemnation, and was like a man transported with an excess of joy: Another upon the pronouncing of the sentence

kneels down, and with hands and eyes lifted up, solemnly blesses God for such a day as that. Oh how is Christ magnified by this! and this cannot be until interest be cleared. It is true, the *faith of recumbency* gives the soul a secret support, and enables the Christian to *live*; but the *faith of evidence* keeps him *lively*, and prevents all those uncomfortable and uncomely sinkings and despondencies of spirit, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17. and therefore cannot but be of a singular use to a soul at such a time.

4. And, lastly, It is of special use to a Christian under sufferings, inasmuch as it enables him to repel the temptations that attend upon sufferings. Nothing sets a keener edge upon his indignation against unworthy compliances, than this. Indeed a poor cloudy and dubious Christian will be apt to catch at deliverance, though upon terms dishonourable to Christ; but he that is clear in point of interest, abhors compositions and capitulations upon unworthy terms and conditions, Heb. xi. 35. and x. 34. He that sees the gain and reward of suffering, will think he is offered to his loss, when life and deliverance are set before him upon such hard terms as sin is.

And thus you see what influence it hath into a suffering condition.

III. In the next place I promised to prescribe some rules for the attaining of this evidence, and the dispelling of those doubts by which it is usually clouded in the souls of believers. And oh, that by the faithful use of them you may attain it, against a suffering day come upon you.

1. *Rule.* And the first rule I shall give you is this, make it your business to improve grace more; for the more *vigorous* it is, the more *evidential* it must needs be, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Oh how much time have many Christians spent in inquiring after the lowest signs of sincerity, and what may consist with grace? Which had they spent in the diligent improvement of the means of grace, for the increasing of it, they would have found it a shorter cut to peace and comfort by much.

2. *Rule.* Mistake not the rule by which you are to try yourselves, lest you give a false judgment upon yourselves. Some are apt to make those things signs of grace, which are not; and when the falseness of them is detected, how is that poor soul plunged into doubts and fears, that leaned upon them? As now, if a man should conclude his sincerity from his diligence in attending on the word preached; this is but a *paralogism*, (as the apostle calls it), Jam. i. 22. By which a man

deceiveth his own ſoul: For that which is note or mark, muſt be proper to the thing notified, and not common to any thing elſe. There are divers ſorts of *marks*; ſome are *excluſive*, the principal uſe of which is to convince bold pretenders, and diſcover hypocrites; ſuch is that, 1 Cor. ix. 9. It is a moſt certain ſign where theſe are, there is no grace; but yet it will not follow on the contrary, that where theſe are not, there is grace. See Luke xviii. 11. Others are *incluſive*, the uſe of which is not ſo much for trying of the truth, as the ſtrength and degrees of grace. As now, when faith is deſcribed by the *radiancy* of it, or by ſome of its heroic acts, and promiſes made to ſome raiſed degrees and operations of it; as that, Eph. iii. 12. *&c.* here a miſtake is eaſily made. Beſides theſe, or rather betwixt theſe, are another ſort of marks, which are called poſitive marks; and theſe agreeing to the loweſt degree of grace, are for the trial of the truth and ſincerity of it. Such are theſe, 1 John iv. 13. 1 John ii. 3. Matth. v. 3. Be ſure to try by a proper mark.

3. *Rule.* Take heed of ſuch ſins as violate and waſte the conſcience; for theſe will quickly raiſe a miſt, and involve the ſoul in clouds and darkneſs, Pſal. li. 8. *&c.* Such are ſins againſt light, and the reclamations of conſcience.

4. *Rule.* Labour to ſhun thoſe common miſtakes that Chriſtians make in judging of their ſtate; amongſt which I ſhall ſelect theſe five as principal ones.

1. Call not your condition into queſtion upon every failing and involuntary lapſe into ſin. "Iniquities prevail againſt "me, as for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away," Pſal. lxv. 3. In ſhort, thou needeſt not call thy condition into queſtion, provided thou find thy ſpirit working as Paul's did under the ſurprizals of temptation: *viz.* If, (1.) Thou do approve of and delight in the law, though thou fall ſhort of it in thy practice, Rom. vii. 12, 14. (2.) If thy failings be involuntary, and againſt the reſolution and bent of thy ſoul, ver. 15, 18, 19. (3.) If it be the load and burden of thy ſoul, ver. 24. (4.) If the thoughts of deliverance comfort thee, ver. 25.

2. Queſtion not the truth of thy grace, becauſe it was not wrought in the ſame way and manner in thee, as in others. For there is a great variety, as to the circumſtances of *time* and *manner*, betwixt the Spirit's operations upon one and another. Compare the hiſtory of Paul's converſion with that of the Jailor, Zacheus, or Lydia, and ſee the variety of circumſtances.

3. Conclude not that you have no grace, becauſe you feel not thoſe tranſports and raviſhing joys that other Chriſtians

ſpeak of. If thou canſt not ſay as Paul doth, Rom. viii. 38, yet bleſs God, if thou canſt but breathe forth ſuch language as that, Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief."

4. Say not thou haſt no grace, becauſe of the high attainments of ſome hypocrites, who in ſome things may excel thee. When ſome perſons read the ſixth chapter to the Hebrews, they are ſtartled to ſee to what a glorious height the hypocrite may ſoar; not conſidering that there are theſe three things wherein they excel the moſt glorious hypocrite in the world. (1.) That ſelf was never dethroned in hypocrites, as it is in them. All that an hypocrite doth is for himſelf. (2.) The hypocrite never hated every ſin, as he doth; but hath ſtill ſome Agag, Rimmon, or Delilah. (3.) That the hypocrite never acted in duty from the bent and inclination of a new nature, taking delight in heavenly employment, but is moved rather as a clock by the weight and poiſes of ſome external motives and advantages.

5. Conclude not you have no grace, becauſe you grow not ſo ſenſibly as ſome other Chriſtians do. You may be divers ways miſtaken about this. (1.) You may meaſure your growth by your deſires, and then it appears nothing; for the Chriſtian aims high, and graſps at all. (2.) Or by comparing yourſelves with ſuch as have larger capacities, time, and advantages, than you. (3.) Or by comparing your graces with other mens gifts, which you miſtake for their graces. (4.) Or by thinking that all growth is upward in joy, peace, and comfort; whereas you may grow in mortification and humility, which is as true a growth as the former. Oh! take heed of theſe miſtakes; they have been very prejudicial to the peace of many Chriſtians.

5. *Rule.* Laſtly, Decline not ſufferings when God gives you a fair call to them. Oh! the Chriſtian's ſuffering time is commonly his cleareſt and moſt comfortable time. "Then "the Spirit of God and glory reſteth on them," 1 Pet. iv. 14. That which hath been in ſuſpence for ſome years, is decided and cleared in a ſuffering hour. And thus I have ſhewed you how to *attain this neceſſary qualification alſo.*

CHAP. VIII.

Diſcovering the neceſſity of an improved faith for the right management of ſufferings, and directing to ſome ſpecial means for the improvement thereof.

THE next thing conducing to our actual readineſs for ſufferings, is the improvement of faith to ſome conſi-

derable degree of ſtrength. This is the grace that muſt do the main ſervice in ſuch an hour; and hath the principal hand in ſupporting the Chriſtian under every burden. This is the grace that crowns our heads with victory in the day of battle, Eph. vi. 16. "Above all taking the ſhield of faith." It is true, every grace is of uſe, and contributes aſſiſtance: Suffering ſaints have been beholding to them all. But of this we may ſay, as Solomon of the virtuous woman; "Though many graces have "done excellently, yet this excels them all." In this grace Paul was very eminent; it was the life he daily lived, Gal. ii. 20. Oh! it is a precious grace, 2 Pet. i. 1. So precious, that Chriſt, who ſeldom admired at any thing, yet wondered at this, Matth. viii. 10. A victorious grace it is that overcomes all difficulties, Mark ix. 23. By this ſword it was that all thoſe famous *heroes*, Heb. xi. atchieved all thoſe glorious conqueſts; and in every diſtreſs it may ſay to the ſoul, as Chriſt to the diſciples, John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do nothing." This is that *ſword* that hath obtained ſo many victories over the world, 1 John v. 4. And that truſty *ſhield* that hath quenched ſo many deadly darts of temptation, which have been levelled at the very heart of a Chriſtian in the day of battle. By it a Chriſtian lives, when all outward ſenſible comforts die, Hab. ii. 4. It is the ground upon which the Chriſtian fixes his foot, and never fails under him, 2 Cor. i. 24. The neceſſity of it will more clearly appear, by conſidering how many ways it relieves the ſoul in trouble, and diſburdens the heart of all its ſinking loads and preſſures: There are two things that ſink a man's ſpirit when under ſufferings; *viz.* The *greatneſs* of the troubles, and the *weakneſs* of the ſoul to bear them; againſt both which faith relieves the ſoul, *viz.* by making a *weak* ſoul *ſtrong*, and *heavy* troubles *light*.

Firſt, It makes a weak ſoul ſtrong and able to bear; and this it doth divers ways.

1. By purging out of the ſoul thoſe enfeebling and weakning diſtempers; not only *guilt* in general, which is to the ſoul as a wound upon the bearing ſhoulder, Rom. v. 1. The removal whereof enables the ſoul to bear any other burden, Iſa. xxxiii. 24. But it alſo removes *fear*, that tyrant paſſion, that cuts the nerves of the ſoul. For as *faith* comes in, ſo *fear* goes out: Look in what degree the fear of God is aſcendant in the ſoul, proportionably the ſinful fear of the creature declines and vaniſheth, Iſa. viii. 12, 13. This fear extinguiſhes that, as the ſun-ſhine puts out fire, "The righteous is bold as a lion," Prov. xxviii. 1. The word כפיר ſignifies a young lion in

his hot blood, that knows no ſuch thing as fear: And look, how much of the ſoul is *empty* of faith, ſo much it is *filled* with fear: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Matth. viii. 26. Certainly, it is a rare advantage, to be freed from the *common diſtraction*, in times of *common deſtruction*; and this advantage the ſoul hath by faith.

2. It ſtrengthens the ſoul to bear afflictions and hardſhips; not only by purging out its weakning diſtempers, but by turning itſelf to Chriſt, in whom all its ſtrength lies; and that ſuitably to the ſeveral exigencies of the ſoul, in all its diſtreſſes. Doth darkneſs, like the ſhadow of death, overſpread the earth, and all the lights of earthly comforts diſappear? then faith ſupports the heart, by looking to the Lord, Micah vii. 7. And this look of faith exceedingly revives the heart, Pſalm xxxiv. 5. and enlightens the ſoul. Doth God pluck away all earthly props from under your feet, and leave you nothing viſible to reſt upon? in that exigence faith puts forth a ſuitable act, *viz. Reſting or ſtaying upon God*, Iſa. xxvi. 3. and by this the ſoul comes to be quieted and eſtabliſhed, Pſalm cxxv. 1. Do temptations ſtrive to put off the ſoul from Chriſt, and diſcourage it from leaning upon the promiſe? Then it puts forth *an act of reſolution*, Job xiii. 15. And ſo breaks its way through that diſcouragement; or hath the ſoul been long ſeeking God for deliverance out of trouble, and ſtill there is ſilence in heaven, no anſwer comes; but inſtead of an anſwer comes a temptation, to throw up the duty, and ſeek to deliver itſelf? Then faith puts forth another act upon Chriſt, ſuitable to this diſtreſs, *viz. An act of waiting*, Iſa. xlix. 23. which *waiting* is oppoſed to that *ſinful haſte* which the ſoul is tempted to, Iſa. xxviii. 16. Or doth God at any time call the ſoul forth to ſome difficult ſervice, againſt which the fleſh and carnal reaſon diſpute and plead? Now faith helps the ſoul, by putting forth *an act of obedience*; and that whilſt carnal reaſon ſtands by diſſatisfied, Gal. i. 16. And hence it is, that obedience carries the name of faith upon it, to ſhew its deſcent, Rom. xvi. 26. Faith encourages the ſoul to obey, not only by urging God's *command*, but by giving it God's *warrant* for its indemnity, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. Or doth a poor believer find himſelf overmatched by troubles and temptations, and his own inherent ſtrength begin to fail under the burden? Then faith leads him to an omnipotent God, and ſecures him from fainting under his trouble, Pſalm lxi. 2. the Lord is everlaſting ſtrength. *El Shaddai*, is a name of encouragement to a feeble ſoul, Iſa. xl. 29, 30, 31. And thus

you see the first particular made good, *viz.* What a strengthening influence it hath upon a weak soul.

Secondly, In the next place, let us see how it *lightens* the Christian's burdens, as well as *strengthens* his back to bear.

And certainly, this grace of faith doth strangely alter the very nature of sufferings, taking away both the *heaviness* and *horror* of them; and this it doth divers ways:

1. By committing the business to Christ, and leaving the matter with him; and so quitting the soul of all these anxieties and perturbations, which are the very burden and weight of affliction, Psalm xxxvii. 5. For certainly, that which sinks us in days of trouble, is rather from within, from our unruly, seditious, and clamorous thoughts, than from the troubles themselves with which we conflict: But by committing the matter to God, the soul is quickly brought to rest.

2. By discovering much present good in our troubles; the more good faith discovers in a trouble, the more supportable and easy it makes it to the soul. Now faith brings in a comfortable report, that they are not *only evils*, as the troubles of the wicked are, Ezek. vii. 5. but have an allay and mixture of much good, Heb. xii. 10. Isa. xxvii. 9.

3. By foreseeing the end and final removal of them, and that near at hand, 2 Cor. iv. 17. That which daunts and amazes men in times of trouble, is, that they can see no end of them. Hence the heart faints, and hands hang down through discouragement: But now faith brings the joyful tidings of the end of troubles; and saith to the soul, "Why art "thou cast down, O my soul? and why so disquieted and dis-"couraged within me? as if thy sufferings were like the suf-"ferings of the damned, endless and everlasting, whereas they "are but for a moment; yet a little while, a very little while, "and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry," Heb. x. 37. Yet a little while, and then the days of thy mourning shall be over.

4. By comparing our sufferings with the sufferings of others, which exceedingly diminisheth and shrinks them up; sometimes the believer compares his sufferings with Christ's, and then he is ashamed that ever he should complain and droop under them. Oh! saith he, what is that, to that which the Lord Jesus suffered for me? He suffered in all his *members*, head, hands, side, feet, from all *hands*, friends and enemies, in all his *offices*; yea, in his soul, as well as in his body: And indeed the sufferings of his soul, were the very soul of his sufferings: Sometimes he compares them with the suf-

ſerings of others of the ſaints in former ages: When he reads in faith the hiſtory of their perſecutions, he is ſhamed out of his complaints, and ſaith, 'Am I better than my fa-'thers?' Sometimes he compares them with the ſufferings of the damned: 'Oh what is this to everlaſting burnings! What 'is a priſon to hell? How light and eaſy is it to ſuffer for 'Chriſt, in compariſon of thoſe ſufferings which are from 'Chriſt?' And thus the ſoul is quieted, and the terror of ſufferings abated.

5. Faith entitles Chriſt to the believer's ſufferings, and puts them upon his ſcore; and ſo it exceedingly transforms and alters them: Ah! it is no ſmall relief, when a man can hold up the Bible, as that *martyr* did at the ſtake, and ſay, 'This 'is that which hath brought me hither?' Or as the Pſalmiſt; "For thy ſake we are killed all the day long:" Or as the apoſtle, Col. i. 24. "I fill up that which is behind of the ſuffer-"ings of Chriſt in my fleſh."

6. Laſtly, Faith engages the preſence of God, to be and abide with the ſoul in all its ſolitudes and ſufferings: It lays hold upon the promiſes made to that purpoſe, Pſalm xxiii. 2. Iſa. xliii. 2. Heb. xiii. 5. John xiv. 18. And whilſt a poor ſoul enjoys this, the very ſenſe of troubles is ſwallowed up.

And thus I have given ſome brief hints, how faith relieves and ſtrengthens the ſoul in a ſuffering hour: The next thing is to direct you how to improve this excellent grace, that it may do you ſuch ſervice as this in a time of need: And, in order thereunto, I ſhall give you theſe ſeven directions.

1. Attend diligently upon the miniſtration of the goſpel, which is not only the procreant, but alſo the conſerving cauſe of faith, 1 Pet. ii. 2. The *doctrine of faith*, is the food and nutriment of the *grace of faith*: There are its rules, its encouragements, its cordials: Thence faith takes and treaſures up its *michtams*, to which it hath recourſe in times of need: Every *attribute*, *command*, or *promiſe*, that ſhines forth there, is a diſh for faith to feed on; but all together are a royal feaſt, Pſalm lxiii. 5. Some ſay the land of Judea is called "the land of the living," in Pſalm xxvii. 13. in reſpect of the ordinances of God, which that people enjoyed. Certain it is, they are the great inſtruments of quickning ſouls at firſt, and preſerving that life it ſo begat in them: But then be ſure they have Chriſt's ſtamp upon them, and that they be miniſtred by his own officers, and in his own way: And ſo you may reaſonably expect more fruits and influences from them,

than from all private gifts and helps in the world: "For the "Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings "of Jacob," Pſalm lxxxvii. 2. And all private helps may ſay, in compariſon of Chriſt's public ordinances, as Gideon ſaid to the men of Ephraim, Judges viii. 2. "What have I "done in compariſon of you?"

2. Improve well your ſacrament ſeaſons, thoſe harveſt-days of faith: This ordinance hath a direct and peculiar tendency to the improvement and ſtrengthening of faith. It is a pledge ſuperadded to the promiſe for faith's ſake: Heavenly and ſublime myſteries do therein ſtoop down to your ſenſes, that you may have the clearer apprehenſions of them; and the clearer the apprehenſions are, the ſtronger the aſſent of faith muſt needs be: By this ſeal alſo the promiſe comes to be more ratified to us; and the firmer the promiſe appears to the ſoul, the more bold and adventurous faith is in caſting itſelf upon it: Oh how many poor doubting trembling ſouls have in ſuch a ſeaſon gathered the full ripe fruits of aſſurance, from the top-boughs of that ordinance!

3. Frequent actings of faith, are rare and ſpecial means of improving it: "To him that hath," (*i. e.*) that improves and uſes what he hath, "ſhall be given," Matth xxv. 29. This was the way by which Paul thrived in faith, and every other grace ſo exceedingly, that he outgrew them that were in Chriſt before him, 1 Cor. xv. 10. It is true, its beginning in the ſoul, is not after the manner of other habits, either moral, or natural: This is not of natural acquiſition, but by divine infuſion: But yet its improvement is in the ſame manner. Oh then! if ever you would have a flouriſhing faith, rouze it up out of the dull habit, and live in the daily exerciſe of it.

4. Go to Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Author and finiſher of faith, and cry to him, as Mark ix. 24. "Lord, increaſe my "faith:" Yea, beg the aſſiſtance of others prayers in this behalf, as the apoſtle did, 1 Theſſ. iii. 10. 2 Theſſ. i. 11. faith animates prayer, and prayer increaſeth faith.

5. Improve times of affliction for the increaſe of faith: For certainly, ſanctified afflictions do notably exerciſe and increaſe this grace, 1 Pet. i. 7. In times of proſperity, we know not what ſtock of faith we have: We live ſo much upon things ſeen, that we cannot many times tell whether we have faith or no: But when difficult days come, then we muſt get out our whole ſubſiſtence and livelihood by faith, Hab. ii. 4. Yea, then we have many proofs and experiments of God's fidelity in the promiſes, which is a choice help to faith, 2 Cor. i. 10.

6. Keep catalogues of all your remarkable experiences; treaſure them up as food for your faith in time to come: Oh! it is a ſingular encouragement and heartening to faith, when it can turn over the records of God's dealing with you in years paſt, and ſay as Joſhua, "Not one thing hath failed," Joſhua xxiii. 14. When it can ſay ſo of promiſes, that have already had their accompliſhments, then they will be apt to ſay concerning thoſe yet to be accompliſhed, as Elizabeth ſaid to Mary, Luke i. 45. "Bleſſed is the ſoul that believeth, for there ſhall be "a performance of thoſe things which are told it by the Lord."

Theſe experiments are the food of faith: Pſalm lxxiv. 14. "Thou breakeſt the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gaveſt "him to be meat to thy people inhabiting the wilderneſs," (*i. e.*) That famous experience of the power and love of God in their red-ſea deliverance, where he deſtroyed that ſea-monſter Pharaoh, and his hoſt, was meat to the faith of God's Iſrael in the wilderneſs afterwards. We often find Chriſt charging the peoples unbelief on a bad memory, Matth. xvi. 8, 9. And, hence it was, that the Lord commanded the Iſraelites to keep *journals* of every day's *occurrences*, Numb. xiii. 1, 2. It is a thouſand pities ſuch choice helps ſhould be loſt. Oh! if you could but remember, how the Lord hath appeared for you in former exigencies, and how often he hath ſhamed you for your unbelief, it would exceedingly animate your faith, both in preſent, and future diſtreſſes, Micah vi. 5.

7. Laſtly, Beware of ſenſe, which is the ſupplanter of faith. O if you live upon things earthly, you put your faith out of its office: Things earthly have an enmity to faith. "This is the "victory by which we overcome the world, even our faith," 1 John v. 4. Overcoming denotes a conflict, and conflicts infer oppoſitions. Oh you that live ſo much by ſight and ſenſe on things viſible, what will you do when in David's, or Paul's caſe, Pſal. cxlii. 4. 2 Tim. iv. 16. when all outward encouragements and ſtays ſhall utterly fail? What had Abraham done, if he had not been able to believe againſt hope, *i. e.* ſuch an hope as is founded in ſenſe and reaſon.

Reader, I adviſe and charge thee in the name of the Lord, and as thou hopeſt to live when viſible comforts die, that thou be diligent in the improvement and preparation of this excellent grace of faith: if it fail, thou faileſt with it; and as thy faith is, ſo art thou. Conſult all the cloud of witneſſes, and ſee if thou canſt find a man amongſt them, that did not atchieve the victory by his faith. Had they not all been run down by the

furious assaults of temptation, and instead of a *cloud of witnesses*, been so many *pillars of salt*, and monuments of reproach and shame to religion, if their faith had failed in its trial.

CHAP. IX.

Wherein the necessity and usefulness of Christian fortitude in order to sufferings is evinced, with a brief account of its nature and the means of attaining it.

THE next grace which concurs to the completeing of our actual readiness for sufferings, is *Christian fortitude*, or holy courage; which must say in thy heart, in a time of danger, as Elijah once did, "As the Lord lives, I will shew myself." This also is a choice part of your preparation-work. In this grace our apostle was eminent: when he was told "Bonds and afflictions waited for him;" he could say, That "none of these things moved him," Acts xx. 24. Yea, when he was to appear before the lion Nero, and not a man would own or stand by him, yet he stands his ground, resolving rather to die on the place, than dishonourably to recede from his principles and profession, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. He set the world with all its threats and terrors, lower than it set him. O how conspicuous was this grace in all those *heroes* that have gone on before us! And if ever you hope to stand in the evil day, and be fetched off the field with honour, you must rouze up and awaken your courage for God: And the necessity thereof will appear upon these four considerations.

1. Because the success and prevalence of Satan's temptations in the hour of persecution depends upon the fainting and overthrow of this grace. Wherefore doth he raise persecutions in the world, but because such terrible things are fitted to work upon the passion of carnal fear, which rises with those dangers, and makes the soul as a tumultuous sea. This is it he aims at, Neh. vi. 13. This is a multiplying passion, that represents dangers more and greater than they are, and so drives the soul into the very net and snare laid by the devil to take it. Prov. xxix. 25. "The fear of man brings a snare;" which was sadly exemplified in Abraham, Gen. xii. 12. and divers others of the saints. If he can but subdue this grace, he will quickly bring you to capitulate for life and liberty, upon the baseest and most dishonourable terms; therefore the preparation of this grace is so exceedingly necessary.

2. Becauſe this is the grace that honours Jeſus Chriſt abundantly, when you are brought upon the ſtage for him.

There is a great ſolemnity at the ſuffering and trial of a ſaint: heaven, earth, and hell, are ſpectators, obſerving the iſſue, and how the ſaints will acquit themſelves in that hour, *We are made a ſpectacle*, ſaith the apoſtle. The word is θεατρον γινομεθα, we are ſet as upon a theatre in public view, 1 Cor. iv. 9. God, angels, and ſaints, wait to ſee the glorious triumphs of their faith and courage, reflecting honour upon the name and cauſe of Chriſt. Devils and wicked men gape for an advantage by their cowardiſe. Certainly very much lies now upon the Chriſtian's hands. Should he faint and give ground, how will it furniſh the triumphs of hell, and make Chriſt's enemies vaunt over him, as if his love ran ſo low in the hearts of his people, that they durſt not adventure any thing for him? Or, as if, notwithſtanding their brave words and glorious profeſſion, they durſt not truſt their own principles when it comes to the trial? But if now they play the men, and diſcover an holy gallantry of ſpirit and reſolution for Chriſt, how will it daunt the enemies, and make them ſay as Marcus biſhop of Aretheuſa made one of Julian's nobles, preſent at his torments, to ſay concerning him, *We are aſhamed, O emperor, the Chriſtians laugh at your cruelty!* And how will God himſelf rejoice and glory over them, as he once did over Job when he fetched him with honour off that firſt field! Job ii. 3. "Still he holdeth faſt his integrity."

3. Your own peace is wrapt up in it, as well as God's glory. Is it nothing, think you, to be freed from thoſe *vultures* and *harpies*, that feed upon the hearts of men at ſuch times? Surely God reckons, that he promiſeth a very great mercy to his people, when he promiſeth it, Prov. i. *ult.* Pſal. cxii. 7. When Borromaeus was told of ſome that lay in wait to take away his life, it troubled him not, but he ſaid, *An Deus eſt in mundo pro nihilo?* What, is God in the world for nought? And like to this was the anſwer of Silentiarius in the like caſe; *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* If God take not care for me, how do I live? Oh this is it that brings you to an holy quietude of ſpirit in times of confuſion and diſtraction, which is a choice mercy.

4. Your magnanimity is of ſpecial uſe to other ſaints, who are following you in the ſame path of ſufferings. If you faint, it is like the fainting of a ſtandard-bearer in an army: you bring thereby an evil report upon the croſs of Chriſt, as the *firſt ſpies* did upon the land of Canaan. And a like influence with that

it is like to have on your brethren; ſo that there is a neceſſity of improving this grace alſo before you can ſay with Paul you are ready.

2. But what is this Chriſtian fortitude, and wherein doth it conſiſt.

I anſwer briefly, *It is an holy boldneſs in the performance of difficult duties, flowing from faith in the call of God, and his promiſe to us in the diſcharge of them.*

And ſo you have the nature of it in theſe four particulars.

1. It is an *holy boldneſs*, not a natural or ſinful boldneſs, ariſing either from the natural conſtitution, or evil diſpoſition of the mind.

2. It is expreſſed about duties for truth, not error, Jer. ix. 3. for the intereſt of Chriſt, not of the fleſh.

3. The ſeaſon in which it appears is, when duties are ſurrounded and beſet with difficulties and dangers, Dan. iii. 16. Dan. vi. 10.

4. The fountain whence it flows is faith, and that as it reſpects the command and call of God to duty, Acts xvi. 10. And his promiſe to us in the diſcharge thereof, Joſh. i. 5, 6.

And this grace ſtands oppoſed, both to the fear of man in the cauſe of God, Heb. xi. 27. and to apoſtacy from the truth for fear of ſuffering. Thus briefly of the nature of it.

3. In the laſt place, I ſhall lay down ſome rules for the promoting and improvement of it, and ſo finiſh this chapter.

Now there are ten rules heedfully to be obſerved for the breeding of holy courage in the breaſt of a ſaint in evil times.

1. *Rule.* And the firſt rule is this, Get a weaned heart from all earthly enjoyments. If the heart be inordinately fixed upon any one thing that you poſſeſs in the world, that inordinate eſtimation of, and affection for it, will ſtrangely effeminate, ſoften, and cowardize your ſpirit when your trial comes, 2 Tim. ii. 4. You meet not with a man of courage for God, but had his heart dead to earthly things; ſo it was with Paul, Phil. iii. 8. Since the apoſtles, we ſcarce meet with a greater example of holy magnanimity than Luther; and if you read his ſtory, you will find few men ever ſet a lower rate on the world than he. All the Turkiſh *empire* in his eye was but a crumb caſt to the dogs. *Germana eſt haec beſtia pecuniam non curat.* Money could not tempt him.

2. *Rule.* Suffer not guilt to lie upon your conſciences: it is a fountain of fears, and you can never attain boldneſs for God till it be removed, Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. *The ſpirit of a ſound mind*

is oppoſed to the ſpirit of fear, 2 Tim. i. 7. Now that ſound mind is a mind or ſpirit that is not wounded, and made ſick and infirm by guilt. O what black fogs and miſts ariſe out of guilt, which becloud our evidences, and fill us with fears and diſcouragements! Gen. xlii. 21, 22.

3. *Rule.* Clear your call to difficult ſervices, be well ſatisfied that you are in that way and poſture God expects to find you in. O what courage this will give! Joſh. i. 9. Then a man may promiſe himſelf God's preſence and protection, 2 Chron. xv. 2. But whilſt a man is dubious here, and cannot tell whether it be his duty or not, that he is engaging in, how can he have courage to hazard any thing for it? For, thinks he, I may ſuffer much from men, and yet have no thanks of God for it, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And further, till a man be clear in this, he cannot commit his cauſe to God. And it is a ſad thing to be cut off from ſo choice a relief as that is, 1 Pet. iv. 19.

4. *Rule.* Get right notions and apprehenſions of your enemies. We are apt to *magnify* the creature, as if he could do more than he *can*, and thereby *diſable* ourſelves from doing what we *ſhould*. Poſſeſs your ſouls with the belief of theſe five things concerning them. (1.) That they are poor weak enemies, Iſa. xl. 15, 17, 22. But as a ſwarm of gnats in the air. See how God deſcribes them, Iſa. li. 13, 14.

(2.) That little power they have is limited by your God, who hath the bounding and ordering of it, John xix. 11. Pſal. lxxvi. 10. (3.) They carry guilt upon them, which makes them more timorous than you, Iſa. viii. 12. Their fear is a ſtrange fear. (4.) They only uſe carnal weapons againſt you, which cannot touch your ſouls. If they were praying enemies that could engage God againſt you, they would be formidable enemies indeed; but this they cannot do. The largeſt commiſſion that any of them ever had from God, extended but to the bodies and bodily concernments of the ſaints, Luke xii. 4, 5. They cannot thunder with an arm like God, nor blot your name out of the book of life, nor take away your part out of the *New Jeruſalem*; therefore fear not man. (5.) Your enemies are God's enemies; and God hath eſpouſed your cauſe and quarrel. The more cruel they are, the kinder he will be to you, John ix. 34, 35.

5. *Rule.* Labour to engage the preſence of God with you in all places and conditions. Whilſt you enjoy this, your ſpirits will be invincible and undaunted, Joſh. i. 9. Pſal. cxviii. 6. A weak creature aſſiſted and encouraged by the preſence of a great God will be able to do and ſuffer great things. Poor

fleſh in the hand of an almighty Spirit acts above itſelf. A little dog, if his maſter be by, and animates him, will ſeize upon a greater beaſt than himſelf, though he would run from him were his maſter abſent. Our courage ebbs and flows as the manifeſtations of the divine preſence do. Oh get thyſelf once within the line of that promiſe, Iſa. xliii. 1, 2. and thou art invincible.

6. *Rule.* Get an high eſtimation of Jeſus Chriſt, and all his concernments. They that *value* him *higheſt*, will *adventure* for him *fartheſt*. Magnanimous Luther, how ineſtimable a value did he ſet upon the truths of Chriſt! *Ruat coelum*, &c. *Let heaven ruſh rather than a crumb of truth ſhould perish.* Thou wilt never be a man of zeal and courage for Chriſt's intereſt, until that intereſt of Chriſt have ſwallowed up all thine own intereſts. No ſooner is the ſoul acquainted with, and intereſted in Chriſt, but he heartily wiſhes well to all his affairs and concernments, Pſal. xlv. 3, 4. This is that which puts metal and reſolution for Chriſt into the ſoul.

7. *Rule.* Beware you be not cheated with maxims of carnal policy, miſtaken for Chriſtian prudence. Many are ſo: and they prove deſtructive to all true zeal and courage for Chriſt. Never was religion profeſſed with greater plainneſs and ſimplicity, than by the primitive Chriſtians: and never was there an higher ſpring-tide of courage and zeal for God, than in thoſe days. We are apt to call it prodigality, and are grown wiſer to huſband our lives and comforts, better than they did. But indeed our prudentials have even ſwallowed up our religion. It is true, there is ſuch a thing as Chriſtian prudence; but this doth not teach men to ſhun all coſtly and difficult duties, and proſtitute conſcience to ſave the ſkin. "A man of "underſtanding walketh uprightly," Prov. xv. 21.

8. *Rule.* Look upon the inſide of troubles for Chriſt, as well as upon the outſide of them. If you view them by an eye of ſenſe, there appeareth nothing but matter of diſcouragement. To look on the outſide of a priſon, baniſhment, or death, is affrighting and horrible: but then, if ye look into the inſide of theſe things by faith, and ſee what God hath made them to his people, and how joyful and comfortable they have been in theſe conditions; what honey they have found in the carcaſs of a lion, what ſongs in the ſtocks and dungeons, what glorying in tribulation, an hundred-fold reward even in their ſufferings: O then! that which looked like a ſerpent at a diſtance, will appear but as a rod in hand. How many have found themſelves quite miſtaken in their apprehenſions of ſufferings;

and been more loth to come out of a priſon, than they were to go in! If you did but ſee your ſupports, and the comforts that ſouls ordinarily meet with in their troubles for Chriſt, you would not look on them as ſuch formidable things.

9. *Rule.* View the iſſue and reward of ſufferings by an eye of faith: this alſo will ſtrongly abate the horror and dread of them, Heb. x. 34. Upon this account it is the ſaints have ſo ſlighted and contemned them, Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17. But then ſee that you act your faith, (1.) Upon the certainty of it: look at it as a moſt real and ſubſtantial thing, Heb. xi. 1. (2.) View it as a great and *glorious reward*: And, (3.) As near at hand: And then ſay to thy ſoul, come on my ſoul, come on; ſeeſt thou the joy ſet before thee! the crown of glory ready to be ſet on thy head by the hand of a righteous God. Oh, what compare is there betwixt thoſe ſufferings, and that glory!

10. *Rule.* Propound to yourſelves the beſt patterns and examples. Keep your eye upon the cloud of witneſſes; theſe are of ſpecial uſe to beget holy courage, Heb. xii. 1. James v. 10. Who would be afraid to enter the liſts, and grapple with that enemy that he hath ſeen ſo often foiled, and that by a poor weak Chriſtian? See how the enemy, with whom you are to grapple, hath been beaten hand to hand, and triumphed over by poor women and children; they had as great infirmities, and you have as gracious aſſiſtances as thoſe that are gone before you.

CHAP. X.

Diſcovering the neceſſity of an heart mortified to all earthly and temporal enjoyments, in order to the right managing of a ſuffering condition: with ſeveral directions for the attaining thereof.

THE next thing wherein your actual readineſs for bonds, or death conſiſteth, is in *the mortification of your affections to all earthly intereſts and enjoyments; even the beſt and ſweeteſt of them*: Till this be done, in ſome meaſure, you are not fit to be uſed in any ſuch ſervice for the Lord, 2 Tim. i. 21. The living world is the very life of temptations: the travailing pains of death are ſtronger and ſharper upon none, than thoſe that are full of ſenſe and ſelf. As you ſee

in nature, what conflicts and agonies ſtrong and lively perſons ſuffer when they die; when others, in whom nature is decayed and ſpent before-hand, die away without half that pain, even as a bird in a ſnell. Corruption in the ſaints, is like the ſap in green wood, which reſiſteth the fire, and will not burn well, till it be dried up. Prepared Paul had an heart mortified in a very high degree, to all the honour and riches of the world, accounting them all but trifles, Gal. vi. 14. 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

The need of this will be evinced by theſe five conſiderations.

1. Unleſs the heart be mortified to all earthly enjoyments, they will appear great and glorious things in your eye and eſtimation; and if ſo, judge what a taſk you will have, to deny and leave them all in a ſuffering hour. It is corruption *within*, that puts the luſtre and glory upon things *without*: it is the carnal eye only that gazes admiringly after them, 2 Cor. v. 16. and hence the *luſt* is put to expreſs the *affection*, 1 John ii. 16. becauſe all that inordinate affection we have to them, ariſes from our high eſtimation of them, and that eſtimation from our luſts, that repreſent them as great and glorious. Therefore, certainly, it will be difficult (if not impoſſible) to deny them, till they have loſt their glory in your eye; and that they will never do, till thoſe luſts within you, that put that beauty and neceſſity upon them, be firſt crucified. As for inſtance, what a glory and neceſſity doth the pride of men put upon the honour and credit of the world, ſo that they will rather chooſe to die, than ſurvive it? But to a mortified ſoul it is a *ſmall matter*, 1 Cor. iv. 3. So for riches, how much are they adored, till our luſts be mortified? and then they are eſteemed but *dung and droſs*, Phil. iii. 8. It is our corruptions that paint and gild over theſe things: when theſe are crucified, thoſe will be lightly eſteemed.

2. Mortification of corruptions is that which recovers an healthful ſtate of ſoul: ſin is to the ſoul, what a diſeaſe is to the body; and mortification is to ſin, what phyſic is to a diſeaſe. Hence thoſe that are but a little mortified, are in a comparative ſenſe called *carnal*, 1 Cor. iii. 3. and *babes*, ver. 2. in reſpect of weakneſs. Now, ſuffering work being ſome of the Chriſtian's hardeſt labour and exerciſe, he cannot be fitted for it, until his ſoul be in an healthful ſtate: a ſickly man cannot carry heavy burdens, or endure hard labours and exerciſes; the ſick ſoldier is left behind in his quarters, or put into the hoſpital, whilſt his fellows are dividing the ſpoils, and obtaining glorious victories in the field. To this ſenſe ſome expound

Rom. viii. 13. "If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if "ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye "ſhall live." Whereas *death* is put to note a languiſhing ſtate of ſoul, whilſt mortification is neglected; ſo life is put to expreſs an healthful and comfortable ſtate; *vivere pro valere*; ſo that upon this account alſo the neceſſity of it appears.

3. Your *corruptions* muſt be mortified, elſe they will be raging and violent in the time of temptation, and, like a torrent, ſweep away all your convictions and reſolutions. It is ſin unmortified within, that makes the heart like gun-powder; ſo that when the ſparks of temptation fly about it, (and they fall thick in a ſuffering hour) they do but touch and take. Hence the *corruptions* of the *world* are ſaid to be *through luſt*, 2 Pet. i. 4. With theſe internal unmortified luſts, the *tempter* holds correſpondence; and theſe be the *traitors* that deliver up our ſouls into his hands.

4. Unleſs you be diligent and ſucceſsful in this work, though you ſhould ſuffer, yet not like Chriſtians; you will but diſgrace religion, and the cauſe for which you ſuffer; for it is not ſimple ſuffering, but ſuffering *as a Chriſtian*, that reflects credit on religion, and finds acceptation with God. If you be envious, fretful, diſcontented, and revengeful, under your ſufferings, what honour will this bring to Chriſt? Is not this altogether unlike the example of your Lord? Iſa. liii. 7. and the behaviour of ſuffering ſaints? 1 Cor. iv. 13. Yet thus it will be, if your pride, paſſion, and revenge, be not firſt ſubdued: for what are the breakings forth of ſuch diſtempers of ſpirit, but as the fluſhes of heat in the face from an ill-affected liver? Moſt certain it is, that all theſe evils are in your natures, and as certain it is, they will riſe like mude and filth from the bottom of a lake, when ſome eminent trials ſhall take you to the bottom; *Natura vexata prodit ſeipſam.*

5. Laſtly, Mortification muſt be ſtudied and plied with diligence; elſe you will find many longings and hankerings after earthly enjoyments and comforts, which will prove a ſnare to you: what is ſin, but the *corrupt* and *vitiated appetite* of the *creature*, to things that are earthly and ſenſual, reliſhing more ſweetneſs and delight in them, than in the bleſſed God? And what is ſanctification, but the rectifying of theſe *inordinate affections*, and placing them on their proper object? A regenerate and mortified Chriſtian taſtes not half that ſweetneſs in forbidden fruits that another doth: ſet but money before Judas, and ſee how eagerly he catches at it —— "What will ye give me,

" and I will betray him?" Set but life, liberty, or any ſuch bait before an unmortified heart, and how impotent is he to withſtand them, as offered in a temptation? Oh thoſe unmortified luſts! how do they make men hanker, long, and their lips water (as we uſe to ſay) after theſe things? This makes them break priſon, decline ſufferings, though upon the baſeſt terms: whereas a mortified Chriſtian can ſee all theſe things ſet before him, yea, offered to him, and refuſe them, Heb. xi. 35. It is with them much as it was with old Brazillai, 2 Sam. xix. 35. When nature is decayed, they find but little pleaſure in natural actions, Eccleſ. xii. 1. And look as the body of ſin decays and languiſhes, ſo do theſe longings alſo: It weans the ſoul from them all, and enables it to live very comfortably without them, Pſal. cxxxi. 1. Phil. iv. 12. There needs no more to be ſaid to evince the neceſſity of mortification, and diſcover what influence it hath into a Chriſtian's readineſs for ſufferings.

It remains therefore, that I open to you ſome of the principal *corruptions*, about which it moſtly concerns you to be ſtow pains ere ſufferings come. Now look as there are four principal enjoyments, in which you are like to be tried, *viz. Eſtate, name, liberty, life*; ſo the Chriſtian work in ſuffering times lies in mortifying theſe four ſpecial *corruptions*, *viz. Firſt*, The love of the world. *Secondly*, Ambition. *Thirdly*, Inordinate affectation of freedom and pleaſure. *Fourthly*, Exceſſive love of life.

1. For the love of this world, away with it, crucify it, crucify it: down with this idol, and let it be dethroned in all that intend to abide with Chriſt in the hour of temptation: how elſe will you take the ſpoiling of your goods? How will you be able to part with all for Chriſt, as theſe bleſſed ſouls did? It grieves my heart to ſee how many profeſſors of religion are carried captive at the chariot-wheels of a bewitching world. Oh! good had it been for many profeſſors, if they had never taſted ſo much of the ſweetneſs of it. *Sirs*, I beg you, for the Lord's ſake, down with it in your *eſtimations*, down with it in your *affections*, elſe temptations will down with you ere long. I ſhall offer five or ſix helps for the crucifying of it.

Firſt, Conſider your eſpouſals to Chriſt, and how you have choſen and profeſſed him for your Lord and huſband: therefore your doating upon the world is no leſs than adultery against Chriſt, James iv. 4. If Chriſt be your huſband, he muſt be a covering to your *eyes*; an unchaſte glance upon the world wounds him.

Secondly, The more you prize it, the more you will be tormented by it; did you prize and love it leſs, it would diſquiet and vex you leſs: it is our doating on it, that makes it draw blood at parting.

Thirdly, Get true *ſcripture-notions* of the world, and rectify your judgments and affections by them. If you will have the *true picture* and *repreſentation* of it drawn by the hand of God himſelf, ſee 1 John ii. 16. it is nothing elſe but *luſt* that puts that *luſtre* upon it: It hath but a *phantaſtic glory*, and that alſo paſſeth away. What is become of them that ruffled it out in the world but one hundred years ago? What could the world do for them? Are they not all gone down to the ſides of the pit? "But he that doth the will of God abideth "for ever."

Fourthly, Study and contemplate Chriſt, and the things above more: this would veil all its glory, and kill it at the root, Phil. iii. 18, 19. Juſt as a man that hath been gazing upon the ſun, when he takes off his eye from that bright and glorious *creature*, and looks to the earth, there is a veil of darkneſs overſpreading the face of it, that he can ſee nothing. I wonder how ſuch as pretend to live above, and enjoy communion with God, can ever reliſh ſuch ſweetneſs in the world, or have their hearts enticed and captivated by it.

Fifthly, Remember always, that by your love and delight in worldly things, you furniſh the devil with the chiefeſt bait he hath to catch and deſtroy your ſouls. Alas! were your hearts but dead to theſe things, he would want an handle to catch hold on. What hath he more to offer you, and tempt you off from Chriſt with, but a little money, or ſome ſuch poor temporal rewards? and how little would that ſoul be moved by ſuch a temptation, that looks on it all but as dirt?

Sixthly, Laſtly, Take notice of the approaches of *eternity*: remember you are almoſt at the end of time: and when you come to launch out into that endleſs ocean, how will theſe things look then? It ſeems glorious, whilſt you are in the chace and purſuit of it; but upon a death-bed, you will overtake and come up with it, and then you will ſee what a deceitful and vain thing it is: ſtand by the beds of dying men, and hear how they ſpeak of it. Oh! the difference betwixt our apprehenſions then, and now! Thus labour to wean off your affections, and crucify them to the world.

2. Mortify your *ambition* and vain *affectation* of the repute and credit of the world: Oh ſtand not on ſo vain a

thing as this: judge it but a small thing to be judged of man, to have your names cast out as *evil*: let not *scoffs* and *reproaches* be such terrible things to you. It is, without doubt, a great trial; else the holy Ghost had not added a peculiar *epithet* to it, which is not given to any other of the sufferings of the saints: not cruel tortures, nor cruel stonings, burnings, slaying with the sword; but *cruel mockings*, Heb. xi. 36. Yet learn to be dead to, and unaffected with these things; set the reproaching world as light, and as low as it sets you: *Despise the shame*, as your master Christ did, Heb. xii. 2. And to promote *mortification* in this, take these helps.

1. Consider this is no new or strange thing that hath happened to you: the holiest of men have past through the like, if not worse trials, Heb. x. 33. Psal. xliv. 14. Reproaches have been the lot of the best men. They called Athanasius, Sathanasius; Cyprianus, Coprianus, a gatherer of dung; blessed Paul, a *pestilent fellow*; Dr. Story threw a faggot at sweet Mr. Denlie's face, as he was singing a psalm in the midst of the flames, saying, *I have spoiled a good old song*.

2. It may be religion hath been reproached and scoffed at for your sakes; and if so, think it not much to be reproached for religion's sake.

3. It is much better to be reproached by men for discharging duty, than by your own consciences for the neglect of it; if all be quiet within, never be moved at the noise and clamour without: If you have a good roof over your head, be not troubled though the winds and storms bluster abroad, 1 Pet. iv. 14. Take heed what you do, and be heedless what the world says.

4. Always remember, that you neither stand nor fall at the world's judgment, and therefore have the less reason to be troubled at it, 1 Cor. iv. 3. If your condition were to be cast to eternity by it, it were somewhat.

5. There is a worth and excellency in the reproaches of Christ, as bad as they seem; and such an excellency, as is not to be matched by any earthly enjoyment, Heb xi. 26. The reproaches of Christ are of more worth than the treasures of Egypt, tho' Egypt then was the magazine of the world for treasures. The apostles counted them their honours, Acts v. 41. When Ludovicus Marsacus, a knight of France, saw those that were to suffer with him in the chains, and that they put none upon him, because of the nobility of his birth, he said to the executioner, *Cur me non quoque torqui donas, et illustris illius ordinis militem non creas?* 'Why do ye not honour me with a chain too, and 'create me a knight of that noble order?'

6. *Laſtly*, Should ſcoffs and reproaches ſcare you from Chriſt and duty; then, though you ſhould eſcape the reproaches of men, yet ſhall you fall under the everlaſting contempt of God, angels, and good men. Therefore, "Fear ye "not the reproaches of men that ſhall die, nor be afraid of their "revilings, for the moth ſhall eat them up like a garment, "and the worm ſhall eat them like wool, but my righte-"ouſneſs ſhall be for ever, and my ſalvation from generation "to generation," Iſa. li. 7, 8.

3. Mortify your *inordinate affections* of liberty, pleaſure, and delicate living. O let not a priſon ſeem ſo formidable to you. It is true, as Chriſt told Peter, in John xxi. 18. "When "thou waſt young, thou girdedſt thyſelf, and walkedſt whither "thou wouldſt; but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhalt ſtretch "forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry thee "whither thou wouldſt not." You have now your liberty to go whither you will, and it is a precious mercy if well improved; the birds of the air (as one ſaith) had rather be in the woods at liberty, though lean and hungry, than in a golden cage with the richeſt fare. But yet, if God will call you to deny this alſo for Chriſt, ſee that you be ready to be bound as Paul was, and receive the chain and bonds of Chriſt with thankſgiving: To which end, conſider,

1. That the affliction, in ſuch caſes of reſtraint, is more from within, than from without you. There is no place but may be delectable to you, if your heart be heavenly, and the preſence of God be engaged with you. What a ſweet night had Jacob at Bethel! Paul and Silas in the ſtocks! See that precious *letter* of Pomponius Algerius.

* *Tranſtulit in cœlum Chriſti præſentia clauſtrum;*
Quid faciet cœlo? quæ cœlum jam creat antro.

It is your own unbelief and impatiency, that gives you more trouble than the condition.

2. No *keeper* can keep the *comforter* from you, if you be the *Lord's priſoners*, Acts xvi. If they could bar out the Spirit from you, it would be a diſmal place indeed: But ordinarily, there the ſaints have their cleareſt *viſions of God*, and ſweeteſt *preſence* of the Spirit. You are the Lord's *freemen*, whilſt men's *priſoners*: All the world cannot diveſt you of the *ſtate of liberty* Chriſt hath purchaſed for you, John viii. 36.

* If the preſence of Chriſt once changed a priſon into a kind of heaven, what will it do in heaven itſelf, which even here doth make a dungeon like heaven?

3. Though a *priſon* looks ſad and diſmal, yet it is not *hell!* Oh bleſs God for that, that is a ſad *priſon* indeed! Beloved, men have their *priſons*, and God hath his: *God's priſon* is a *terrible priſon* indeed, thouſands are now there in chains, 1 Pet. iii. 19. and there you deſerved to have been ſent long ago: If God exchange an *hell* for a *priſon*, have you any cauſe to complain?

4. How obdurate and cruel ſoever men are to you, yet the *Lord Jeſus* is kind and tender-hearted to his *priſoners*; he puts the kindneſſes that any ſhew them upon his own account, Matth. xxv. 36. "He looks down from heaven to hear the "ſighings and groanings of his priſoners," Pſal. cii. 20. He will tenderly ſympathize with you in all your *priſon-ſtraits* and *troubles*.

5. A *priſon* hath been handſelled and perfumed by the beſt and holieſt of men in all ages, 1 Kings xxii. 27. Jer. xxxii. 2. Matth. iv. 12. Acts v. 18. and xxvi. 10. God hath made it a ſettled *ſchool of diſcipline* to them.

6. Should you, to avoid a *priſon*, commit a ſin, inſtead of being man's *priſoner*, you ſhall be clapt up by God, for he hath a priſon for your ſouls even in this world, Pſal. cxlii. 7. And this is ten thouſand times more dreadful, than any *dungeon* in the world. Oh it is a *dark priſon!* nothing to let in the leaſt *beam of God's countenance* upon your poor *ſouls*. What a ſad exchange have you made then?

7. Conſider what a ground of comfort God hath laid in that word, Rev. ii. 10. to obviate the fears and terrors incident to us in ſuch a condition: God hath limited Satan and his inſtruments, both for time, number, and all circumſtances of the trial.

8. *Laſtly*, You do not know what a mercy may be in it: It may be a time of retirement from the world, and the clamours and diſtractions that are abroad. Theſe days of impriſonment may be your holy-days; as a priſoner of Chriſt once called them.

4. Get an heart mortified to the exceſſive and inordinate love of life: This, I confeſs, is the higheſt and hardeſt point of *ſelf-denial*, becauſe it wraps up all other *ſelf-intereſts* in it. But yet conſider,

Firſt, Though life be very dear, yet Jeſus Chriſt is ten thouſand times dearer than thy life: If thou be a ſaint, he is the life of thy life, and the length of thy days; and in compariſon of him, and his glory, ſaints ſhould, and have deſpiſed and ſlighted their lives, Luke xiv. 26. Rev. xii. 11.

Secondly, Die you muſt: and if by ſhrinking from Chriſt, you ſhould protract a miſerable life for a few days longer, in the mean time loſing that *which is better than life*, Pſal. lxiii. 3. Matth. x. 39. Oh! when you lie upon your death-bed, you will wiſh that you had obeyed God's call, and ſo have departed in peace.

Thirdly, If you have cordially covenanted with Chriſt, (as all ſincere believers have done), then you have yielded up your lives to him, to be diſpoſed of for his glory, Rom. xiv. 7. So that, look as Chriſt both lived and died for you; ſo *ought you to live as Chriſt*: And all the excellency you ſee in life, conſiſts in that reference and ſubſerviency it hath to his glory. I ſay then, if you have underſtandingly and cordially tranſacted in a covenant-way with him, your care will not be ſo much how to ſhun death, as by what death you may moſt glorify God, John xxi. 19. And certainly, you can never lay them down upon a more honourable or comfortable account than in his cauſe, and for his ſake. It was a great trouble to Luther, that he carried his blood to his grave.

Fourthly, To die for Chriſt, is one of the higheſt teſtifications of your love to Chriſt, that you are capable of, John xiii. 37. Yea, it is ſuch a teſtification of your love to the Lord Jeſus, as angels are not capable of making.

Fifthly, Why ſhould you decline even a violent death for Chriſt, when as the bitterneſs of death is paſt, and there is no *hell* following the *pale horſe?* It cannot ſeparate you from Chriſt, Rom. viii. 38.

Sixthly, Think what a death Chriſt ſuffered for you: In which the fulneſs of the wrath both of God and man met together, ſo that he was ſore amazed; yet with deſire, did he deſire it for your ſakes.

7. *Laſtly*, Think what a life you ſhall have with Chriſt, as ſoon as this is delivered up to, and for him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. It is but wink, and you ſhall ſee God.

Oh that theſe things might provoke you to follow on, and ply the work of *mortification*.

CHAP. XI.

Wherein is opened the ſingular advantage that ſuffering ſaints have by their ſkill and inſight into the methods and myſteries of Satan's temptations; ſome of thoſe wiles of Satan opened, and rules for the avoiding of the danger briefly preſcribed.

THE hazards and dangers of Chriſtians in times of perſecution, ariſe not ſo much from their ſufferings, as from the temptations that always attend, and are by Satan planted upon their ſufferings: for the moſt part, ſufferings and temptations go together, Heb. xi. 37. And therefore it behoves ſuch as are, or expect to be, called to ſufferings, to dive into the myſteries of temptations, and be well acquainted with the enemy's deſigns upon them. So was Paul, and ſo he ſuppoſes all others to be, that engage in the ſame cauſe: "We are not ignorant of his devices," 2 Cor. ii. 11. There is a manifold advantage redounding to ſuffering ſaints thereby.

1. He that is well acquainted with the methods of temptation, will be better able to deſcry the firſt approaches and beginnings of it, and a temptation diſcovered, is more than half conquered. It is a ſpecial artifice of Satan, to ſhuffle in his temptations as undiſcernably as may be into the ſoul; for he knows, that "in vain is the net ſpread in the ſight of any "bird," Prov. i. 17. And therefore he ordinarily makes a ſuffering ſeaſon to be a tempting ſeaſon; becauſe ſufferings, like fire to iron, make it impreſſive and operable, they do ordinarily put the ſoul into an hurry and diſtraction, and ſo gives him an advantage to tempt the ſoul with leſs ſuſpicion, and greater ſucceſs. But now, a ſkilful Chriſtian, that is acquainted with his wiles, will diſcern when he begins to *enter into temptation;* as Chriſt's expreſſion is, Luke xxii. 46. And ſo check the temptation in its firſt riſe, when it is weakeſt; and moſt eaſily broken. Doubtleſs one reaſon why ſo many fall by temptation, is, becauſe it is got within them, and hath prevailed far, before it be diſcovered to be a temptation.

2 He that is well acquainted with Satan's methods of tempting, will not only diſcern it ſooner than another; but alſo knows his work and duty, and how to manage the conflict with it, which is a great matter. There are many poor ſouls that labour under ſtrong temptations, and know not what to

do: They go up and down complaining, from Chriſtian to Chriſtian, whilſt the judicious Chriſtian plies to the *throne of grace* with ſtrong cries, ſee 2 Cor. xii. 8. keeps up his watch, Luke xxii. 46. countermines the temptation, by aſſaulting that *corruption*, by endeavours of *mortification*, which Satan aſſaults by temptation, 1 Cor. ix. 27.

3. Laſtly, To name no more; he that is beſt acquainted with the *myſtery of temptation*, and can maintain his ground againſt it, he ſhall be the perſevering Chriſtian under perſecutions, and the victorious Chriſtian over them. Here lies the main deſign of Satan, in raiſing perſecution againſt the ſaints. It is not ſo much their blood that he thirſteth after, as their fall by temptation: and all perſecutions are deſigned by him to introduce his temptations. Theſe work upon our fear, and fear drives us into his trains and ſnares, Prov. xxix. 25. The devil's work in raiſing perſecution, is but as the fowler's work in beating the buſh in the night, when the net is ſpread to take the birds, which he can affright out of their coverts. He that underſtands this, is not eaſily moved by the ſtrongeſt oppoſition, from his place and duty; and ſo is like to prove the moſt conſtant and invincible Chriſtian in times of perſecution.

Oh! then, how neceſſary is it, that ſince all perſecutions are intended as means to promote temptation, and that ſkill and inſight into theſe deſigns of Satan ſo advantages as to fruſtrate his deſigns in both? I ſay, how neceſſary is it that you ſhould be all inſtructed wherein the ſtrength of temptation lies; as alſo how to reſiſt thoſe ſtrong and dangerous temptations, which your ſufferings only are intended to uſher in, and make way for?

It will not be unſeaſonable or impertinent, then, in this chapter, to ſhew you, *Firſt*, Wherein the force and efficacy of temptation lieth; *Secondly*, What you are to do, when in a ſuffering hour ſuch temptation ſhall aſſault you. And firſt,

Queſt. Wherein doth the efficacy and power of temptation lie?

Sol. I anſwer, It lies principally in three things.

I. In the kind and nature of the temptation.

II. In the craft and policy of Satan in managing it.

III. In that ſecret correſpondency that Satan hath with our corruptions.

I. It lies in the kind and nature of the temptation itſelf; for it is moſt certain, that all temptations are not alike forci-

ble and dangerous. Some are ordinarily more successful than others; and such are these that follow.

1. Strange and unusual temptations, I mean not such as none have been troubled with before us; for there is not a dart in Satan's quiver, but hath been let fly at the breasts of other saints, before it was levelled at ours, 1 Cor. x. 13. But by strange and unusual, I mean such as the people of God are but rarely troubled with, and possibly we were never exercised with before. These are the more dangerous, because they daunt and amaze the soul, and ordinarily beget despondency, even as some strange disease would do that we know not what to make of, nor can learn that others have been sick of.

2. Mark them for most dangerous temptations, that are *adapted* and suited to your proper sin, or *evil constitution*: For certainly that is the most dangerous crisis of temptation when it tries a man there. Now, if he be not truly gracious, he falls by the root irrecoverably, Luke xxii. 5, 6. Or if sincere, yet without special assistance, and extraordinary vigilance, he falls scandalously, 2 Sam. xi. 2. compared with 1 Sam. xvi. 12.

3. When it is a *spiritual temptation*, which rises undiscernably out of the Christian's duties. This is the less suspected, because temptations usually come from the strength and liveliness of *corruptions*: but this, from the slaughter and conquests we make of them. Duties, and enlargements in them, which are the poison of other lusts, proves the food and fuel of this, 1 Cor. iv. 7, 8. And how much the more covert and close any temptation is, by so much the more dangerous it is.

II. The strength and efficacy of temptation lies much in the skill and policy of Satan in the management of it: And hence they are called wiles, methods, and devices, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Eph. vi. 11. and himself an old serpent, Rev. xii. 9. And among the rest of his deep and desperate stratagems these following are remarkable.

1. In employing such instruments to manage his temptations as are least suspected, and have the greatest influence. *A teacher*, Gal. ii. 14. *A wife*, Gen. iii. 6. Job ii. 9. *Friends*, Acts xxi. 13. The devil knows it is a bad business, and therefore must make the best of it; Paul's sorest trial was by his dearest friends.

2. In the orderly disposition and ranging of his temptations, beginning with little things first, and then by degrees working over to greater. His first motions are commonly most modest, Gen. iii. 1. Should he discover the depth of his design at first, it would startle the soul, and make it reply as Ha-

nael, "Am I a dog that I should do thus?" It is far easier to gain his end by parts, than putting for all at once.

3. In endeavouring to engage the soul upon his own ground. I mean to tempt him from his station and duty where God sets, and expects to find him. He knows while you are with God, God is with you, 2 Chron. xv. 2. Whilst a man abides there, he abides with God, 1 Cor. vii. 24. Whilst he is there, the promise is a good breast-work to keep off all his darts: And therefore, as fishers, when they have spread their net in the river, beat the fishes out of their coverts and caverns; so doth Satan.

4. In not presenting the temptation, till the soul be prepared to receive it. He loves to strike when the iron is hot. He first lets their troubles come to an height, brings them to the prison, gibbet, or fire, and then offers them deliverance, Heb. xi. 35, 37.

5. In tiring our souls with a long continuance of temptations. What he cannot win by a *sudden storm*, he hopes to gain by a *tedious siege*. Forty days together he assaulted the Captain of our salvation, Mark i. 13. And truly it is a wonder the soul yields not at last, that hath been tried long, Psal. cxxv. 3. "When the rod of the wicked lies long upon the back of the "righteous, it is much if he put not forth his hand to iniqui-"ty."

6. In falling most violently upon them, when they are lowest and most prostrate in their spirits and comforts: So he assaulted Job with a temptation, *to curse God and die*, when he sat in that deplorable state upon the dunghill, Job ii. 8, 9. He loves to fall upon us, as Simeon and Levi did upon the Shechemites, when we are sore and wounded: And therefore ordinarily you find times of *divine desertions* to be times of *diabolical temptations*. So that, look, as the wild beasts of the desart come out of their dens in the night, and then rore after their prey, Psal. civ. 20. so doth Satan, when the soul seems to be benighted and lost in the darkness of spiritual troubles.

And this is the second thing wherein the efficacy and strength of temptation lies.

III. Lastly, It lies in that secret correspondency Satan holds with our bosom enemies. Were it not for this *domestic traitor*, he could not surprize us so easily: As you see in Christ; he could do nothing because he found nothing to fasten a temptation on. He was like a *chrystal glass* filled with pure fountain water: So that though he should have been agitated and shaken never so much by temptation, yet no fil-

thy ſediment could appear; but now we have an enemy within that holds intelligence with Satan without; and this would prove a *devil* to us, if there were no other *devil* to tempt us, Jam. i. 14, 15. It is a fountain of temptation in itſelf, Matth. xv. 19. and the chief inſtrument by which Satan doth all his tempting work, 2 Pet. i. 4.

Our ſeveral paſſions and affections are the handles of his temptations. Every thing, ſaith Epictetus, hath δυο λαβας, two handles to take it by. Our affections are the handles of our ſouls. The temptation of ſelf-confidence, and pride, takes hold of a daring and forward diſpoſition, the temptation of apoſtacy upon a timorous diſpoſition, *&c.* Theſe inbred luſts go over to the enemy in the day of battle, and fight againſt the ſoul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. This is a more dangerous enemy than the *devil.* It is true, they both work againſt us, but with a double difference. Satan works *externally* and *objectively;* but luſt *internally* and *phyſically*, i. e. *quoad materiale*, as it is capable of phyſical efficiency. "Sin wrought in me all manner of "concupiſcence," Rom. vii. 8. Yea, it is a ſubtle enemy that doth his buſineſs politicly, Rom. vii. 11. *Sin deceived me*; it betrays with a kiſs, ſtrangles with a *ſilken halter*, Heb. ii. 13. Eph. vii. 22. Theſe be his agents ſitting at the *council-table* in our own breaſts, and there carrying on his deſigns effectually: Yea, it is the reſtleſs and perpetual enemy, no ridding your hands of him. Satan is ſometimes put to flight by reſiſtance, Jam. iv. 7. and ſometimes ceaſes his temptations, Luke iv. 13. But when he ceaſeth to *tempt* and *inject*, this ceaſeth not to irritate and ſollicit; where we are, it will be; it is our ſad lot to be tied to it, and perpetually aſſaulted by it, Rom. vii. 24. We may ſay of it as Hannibal ſaid of Marcellus, that it is never quiet, whether a *conqueror*, or conquered; yea, it is a potent enemy too, it hauls men away to the commiſſion of ſin, Jam. i. 14. it ſeizeth the magazine of the ſoul, and delivers up the arms, I mean the members, to be οπλα αδικιας, weapons of unrighteouſneſs.

Thus you ſee wherein the efficacy and power of temptation conſiſts. And it mightily concerns you that are, or expect to be ſufferers for Chriſt, to be acquainted with theſe things, and know where the ſtrength of your enemy lies.

But how ſhall the ſuffering ſaint ſo manage himſelf in a ſuffering hour, as not to be captivated by temptations? This brings me upon the ſecond thing I promiſed; *viz.* to preſcribe ſome rules for the eſcaping or conquering of thoſe temptations that are incidental to a ſuffering ſtate. And firſt,

1. *Rule.* Labour to cut off the advantages of temptations before they come. It is our inordinate love to life, estate, liberty, and ease, that gives the temptations so much strength upon us. Do not over-value them, and you will more easily part from them, Rev. xii. 11. O mortify self-love, and creature-love; let your heart be loosened and weaned from them, and then the temptation hath lost its strength.

2. *Rule.* Secure to yourselves an interest in the heavenly glory. When once you clearly see your propriety in the kingdom above, you will set the lighter and lower by all things on earth. That is a pregnant text to this purpose, Heb. x. 34. It is our darkness and uncertainties about those, that make us cling so fast to these.

3. *Rule.* Settle this principle in your heart, as that which you will never depart from, that it is better for you to fall into any suffering, than into the least sin, Heb. xi. 24, 25. This all will acknowledge, but how few practise it! Oh that you would practically understand and receive it! Suffering is but a *respective, external,* and *temporal* evil; but sin is an universal, internal, and everlasting evil.

4. *Rule.* Believe that God hath cursed and blasted all the ways of sin, that they shall never be a shelter to any soul that flies for refuge to them, Mark viii. 35. Prov. xiii. 15. The way of transgressors is a hard and difficult way. There is no security in the way of iniquity. He that runs from suffering to sin, runs from the seeming to the real danger; from the painted, to the living lion.

5. *Rule.* Live up to this principle, that there is no policy like sincerity and godly simplicity. This will preserve and secure you, when carnal wisdom will expose and betray you. Psal. xxv. 2. Job ii. 3. Sinful policy never thrives with saints.

6. *Rule.* Consider sadly what the consequence of yielding up yourselves to temptations will be: The name of God will be dreadfully reproached, 2 Sam. xii. 14. A fatal stumbling-block is laid before the blind world, 1 Sam. ii. 36. The hearts of many upright ones made sad, Psal. xxv. 3. The fall of a professor is as when a standard-bearer fainteth; and a dreadful wound it will be to thine own conscience, 2 Cor. ii. 7. Matth. xxv. 76. One hour's sleep of security, may keep you many days and nights waking upon the rack of horror.

7. *Rule.* Never engage a temptation in your own strength, but go forth against it trembling in yourselves, and relying on Divine aids and assistances, Eph. vi. 10. What! are you to grapple with spirits, to enter the lists with *principalities* and

powers? Or what is your ſtrength that you ſhould hope?

8. *Rule.* Let the days of your temptation be days of ſtrong cries and ſupplications. Thus did Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 8. Pſal. cix. 4. Your beſt poſture to wreſtle with temptation, is upon your knees.

9. *Rule.* Dwell upon the conſideration of thoſe choice encouragements God hath laid up in the word for ſuch a time. As, (1.) Though he give Satan leave to tempt you, yet you are ſtill in his hand to preſerve you, Deut. xxxiii. 3. John x. 28. (2.) That whilſt Satan is ſifting and trying you on earth, Chriſt is interceeding for you in heaven, Luke xxii. 31, 32. (3.) That an eternal reward is laid up for thoſe that overcome, Luke xxii. 28, 29. Rev. xxi. 7, 8. And now is this reward to be won or loſt.

Laſtly, Be content till God open a door out of your temptations, 1 Cor. x. 13. The time of the promiſe will come, Acts vii. 17. Wait for it, though it tarry, and ſeem to be deferred; in the end it will ſpeak, and not lie, Hab. ii. 3. There was a ſecret door in the ark, though it could not be ſeen whilſt the waters prevailed: And ſo there is in all your temptations, though at preſent it be not diſcernible by you.

And thus I have brought you one ſtep nearer to Paul's bleſſed frame. O give diligence to make yourſelves ready for ſufferings.

CHAP. XII.

Sheweth, that a choice part of our preparation and readineſs for ſufferings conſiſts in the improvement of our praying abilities, and keeping cloſe with God in that heavenly and excellent duty, in days of ſuffering; wherein alſo is opened the nature and means of its improvement.

PRayer is ſaid to be amongſt duties, as faith is amongſt the graces. Doubtleſs it is of ſpecial uſe and ſervice at all times to a Chriſtian: But yet in ſuffering days it is of more than ordinary uſe and neceſſity, Heb. iv. 16. James v. 13. And therefore it is reckoned among thoſe choice pieces of armour, which ſuffering ſaints are to put on, Eph. vi. 18. I will here briefly diſcover the neceſſity of it, and then ſhew you that a Chriſtian may improve himſelf to an excellent degree in it; and, laſtly, preſcribe ſome means for an improvement.

The neceſſity of it to a ſuffering ſaint will demonſtratively appear, if you conſider,

1. That this duty is the outlet of troubles, and the beſt way the poor Chriſtian hath to eaſe his heart when ſurcharged with ſorrow. Griefs are eaſed by groans. Such evaporations diſburden and cool the heart, as the opening of a vein in ſome caſes doth. Oh the ſenſible eaſe that comes in this way! When grief in the mind, like vapours in the air, are condenſed into black clouds, that overſpread the ſoul, and darken that beautiful light that once ſhone there, then prayer, like the ſun, diſpels and ſcatters them, 1 Sam. i. 18. Many a ſaint, by prayer, hath ſucked the breaſt of a promiſe, and then fell aſleep by Divine contentment in the boſom of God. A time may come, when thy heart is ready to break with trouble, and not a friend to whom thou canſt open and eaſe it, and then bleſſed be God for prayer, Micah vii. 5, 6, 7. That which ſinks others is, that when troubles fill and overwhelm their hearts, they try what reaſon, merry company, or outward comforts can do: But, alas! this is to palliate a cure, it returns again with the more violence: But prayer gives ſenſible relief, Pſal. cii. *title*, Pſal. lxii. 8. For, (1.) This opens and gives a vent to troubles, Jer. xx. 12. (2.) It gives our troubles a diverſion, and ſo a cure, Pſal. v. 1. and the laſt verſe compared. Yea, (3.) By praying over them, they are not only diverted, but ſanctified, and ſo ceaſe to be diſtracting, or deſtroying troubles.

2. As it gives a vent to our troubles, ſo an in-let to unſpeakable comforts and conſolations. See a pregnant inſtance of this, Acts xvi. 25. For, (1.) Hereby they obtain gracious anſwers from the Lord concerning their troubles, 2 Cor. xii. 9. In this alſo they meet the gracious ſmiles of God, which ſwal low up their troubles, Pſal. lxxxv. 8. And, laſtly, hereby they prevail with God to open a ſeaſonable and effectual door out of all their troubles, Pſalm xxxiv. 4, 6.

3. Prayer begets and maintains holy courage and magnanimity in evil times. When all things about you tend to diſcouragement, it is your being with Jeſus that makes you bold, Acts iv. 13. He that uſes to be before a great God, will not be afraid to look ſuch little things as men are in the face. The woman clothed with the ſun, had the moon under her feet. And what need you have of courage in evil times, hath been already ſhewed.

4. This is a duty you may perform at any time, or in any condition: No adverſary can cut you off from it. It cannot be ſaid ſo of many other duties. None can hinder the inter-

courſe betwixt heaven and your ſouls: You may perform in a priſon, Acts xvi. 25. in a baniſhed condition, Pſal. 2. And ſo is fitted for a ſuffering condition.

Laſtly, You muſt ſtrive to excel in this, foraſmuch as grace within, or ſervice without, can thrive without it. G hath ordained the whole work of grace to grow up to perf tion this way, Judg. xix. 20. He will have all mercies fetch out this way, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Jer. xxix. 11, 12, 13. All th comes from God to you, or to you from God, muſt come this channel. Be convinced then of the need you have to i prove yourſelves herein, as ever you hope to ſtand in the day.

But how are theſe praying abilities capable of improvem in the people of God?

Praying abilities are either external and common, or elſe ternal and ſpecial. The external and common ability is nothi elſe but that dexterity and ſkill men get to expreſs themſelv to God in prayer. Thus many can put their meaning into and decent expreſſions, to which the Spirit ſometimes adds common touches upon the affections. And this hypocrite reſt on, and glory in. Or elſe they are ſpecial and internal whereby men are enabled to pour out their ſouls to God in gracious manner. And this may be conſidered either in the habit or the act. The habit is given by the Spirit, when the principles of grace are firſt infuſed into the ſoul, Zech. xii. 10. Acts ix. 11. By being ſanctified we are made near, and by acting thoſe principles in prayer we are ſaid to draw near, Pſal. x. 17. Now in our actual drawing near to God, the Spirit hath the chief and principal hand: And his aſſiſtance therein is threefold.

1. He excites the heart to the duty; it is he that whiſpers to the ſoul to draw nigh to God, Pſalm. xxvii. 8.

2. He ſuggeſts the matter of our prayers, and furniſhes us with the materials, Rom. viii. 26. guiding us as to the matter, not only to what is lawful, but alſo to what is expedient for us.

3. He ſtirreth up ſuitable affections in prayer, Rom. viii. 26. And hence thoſe groans and tears, thoſe gaſpings and vehement anhelations. But notwithſtanding all our abilities, both habitual and actual, be from the Spirit, and not from ourſelves, yet are they capable of improvement by us: For though in reſpect of acquirement, there be a great difference betwixt natural and ſupernatural habits, yet their improvement is in

the ſame way and manner; and this improvement may be made divers ways: For,

Firſt, Though you have the Spirit, and can pray, yet you may learn to pray more humbly than before: Though you riſe no higher as to words, yet you may learn to lay yourſelves lower before the Lord, as Abraham and Ezra did, Gen. xviii. 27. Ezra ix. 6.

Secondly, You may learn to pray with more ſincerity than formerly: Ah! there is much *hypocriſy* and *formality* in our *prayers*, much of cuſtom, *&c.* Now, you may learn to pour out more *cordial prayers*. See Pſal. xvii. 1. Pſal. cxix. 10.

Thirdly, You may learn to pray with more zeal and earneſtneſs than before: Some ſaints have excelled, and been remarkable for this, Dan. ix. 19. Hoſea xii. 4. James v. 16.

Fourthly, With more aſſiduity and readineſs at all times for it, Epheſ. vi. 18. *Praying always*, with all prayer. Hence Chriſt gives that commendation to the church, Cant. iv. 11. "Thy lips, O my ſpouſe, drop as the honey-comb." The *honey-comb* often drops, but always hangs full of drops ready to fall.

Fifthly, You may learn to pray with more faith: Oh the qualms of unbelief, that go over our hearts in a duty; faith is the ſoul of prayer, and according to the faith God finds in them, he accepts and values them. Now in all theſe things you may improve yourſelves abundantly.

1. By being more frequent in the duty, Job xxii. 21. "Acquaint thyſelf with the Almighty;" in the Hebrew it is, *accuſtom thyſelf*: Thoſe that have been excellent, have alſo been abundant in it, Pſal. xv. 17.

2. By taking heed that you grieve not the Spirit, on whoſe influences and aſſiſtances you ſo intirely depend: Even as much as a ſhip doth upon the gales of wind for its motion.

3. By honouring the Spirit which enables you to pray, and that eſpecially two ways; (1.) By dependance on him; go not forth in your own ſtrength to the duty, truſt not to your own promptneſs, or preparations. (2.) By returning, and with thankfulneſs aſcribing the praiſe of all to him; be humble under all enlargements: ſay, *Not I, but grace.*

4. By ſearching your own hearts, and examining your neceſſities and wants, when you draw nigh to God; this will be a fountain of matter, and give you a deep reſentment of the worth of mercies prayed for.

5. Laſtly, By looking more at the exerciſe of graces, and leſs at the diſcovery of parts; by labouring for impreſſions more,

and pumping for expreſſions leſs. And thus I have brie
ſhewed you, how to furniſh yourſelves with this needful quali
fication alſo.

CHAP. XIII.

*Wherein is ſhewed the neceſſity of going out of ourſelves, e
when our habitual and actual preparations are at the greate
height; and depending as conſtantly and entirely upon t
Spirit, who is Lord of all gracious influences, as if we ha
done nothing: Together with the means of working the hear
to ſuch a frame.*

THus you have ſeen your habitual and actual readineſs f
ſufferings; and bleſſed is the ſoul that gives diligen
to this work: But now leſt all that I have ſaid, and you ha
wrought, ſhould be in vain; I muſt let you know, that a
this will not ſecure you, unleſs you can, by humility, faith
and ſelf-denial, go out of yourſelves to Chriſt, and live upo
him daily for ſupply of grace, as much as if you had none o
all this furniture and proviſion for ſufferings. I confeſs, grac
is a very beautiful and lovely creature, and it is hard for a ma
to look upon his own graces, and not doat upon them
But yet know, that if you had all theſe excellent preparation
that have been mentioned, yea, and all angelical perfection
ſuperadded, yet are you not complete without this dependance
upon Chriſt, Col. ii. 10. Whenever you go forth to ſuffe
for Chriſt, you ſhould ſay at the head of all your excellent grace
duties, and preparations, as Jehoſaphat did, when at the hea
of a puiſſant and mighty army, 2 Chron. xx. 12. "O Lord,
"have no might nor ſtrength, but my eyes are unto thee."
This is one thing in which Paul excelled, and was a ſpecial
part of his readineſs. See 1 Cor. xv. 10. What a poor crea
ture is the eminenteſt ſaint, leſt to himſelf in an hour of trial!
the *hop*, the *ivy*, and the *woodbine*, are taught by nature to cling
about ſtronger props and ſupporters: What they do by nature,
we ſhould do by grace.

The neceſſity and great advantage of this will appear upon
divers conſiderations.

Conſid. 1. The Chriſtian's own imbecility and inſufficiency,
even in the ſtrength and height of all his acquirements and
preparations; what are you, to grapple with ſuch an adverſary?
Certainly, you are no match for him that conquered Adam
hand to hand in his ſtate of integrity. It is not your inherent

strength that enables you to stand, but what you receive, and daily derive from Jesus Christ, John xv. 5. "Without me," or never so little separated from me, "ye can do nothing; all "your sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. iii. 5. Upon this very consideration it was, that the apostle exhorts the Ephesians, to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," (*i. e.*) not to depend upon their own stock and furniture; but Divine assistances, and daily communications; "For we wrestle not "with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers," Eph. vi. 10, 12. In his own strength shall no man prevail.

Consid. 2. It is the great design of God in the gospel, to exalt his Son, and to have all glory attributed and ascribed to him, "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence," Col. i. 18. That Christ "might be all in all," Col. iii. 11. Hence, no saint must have a self-sufficiency, or be trusted with a stock as Adam was, but Christ being filled with all the fulness of God, and made the πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, or first receptacle of all grace; "For it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness "should dwell;" all the saints are therefore to go to him for supplies, and of his fulness to receive, John i. 16. This fulness being a *ministerial fulness*, like that of the sun, or of a fountain, intended to supply all our wants. And hence is it that faith, a self-emptying and denying grace, is appointed to be the instrument of fetching our supplies from Christ. All must be derived from him, that all the praise and glory may be ascribed to him, Phil. iv. 14. And this is a most wise and congruous ordination of God, for hereby not only are his people the better secured, but by this also, the reproach that lay upon Christ is rolled away. He was reproached on earth, as barren, empty, weak; "Can any good come out of Naza-"reth?" He was looked upon as a "Root springing out of a "dry ground," but by this shall his reproach be wiped away: So that unless you will go about to cross the great design of God, in the exaltation of his Christ, you must go out of yourselves, and humbly and constantly rely upon supplies from Christ, and his grace, to help in the times of need.

Consid. 3. A Christian is constantly to depend upon Christ, notwithstanding all his own preparations, and inherent qualifications; because the activity even of inherent grace depends upon him. Inherent grace is beholding to exciting and assisting grace for all it is enabled to do. You cannot act a grace without his Spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 10. 2 Cor. iii. 5. John xv. 5. It may be said of grace in us, as it was of the land of Canaan, Deut. xi. 10, 11, 12. "It is not as the land of Egypt, whence

" ye came out, where thou ſowedſt thy ſeed, and watereſt it " with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: but a land of hills and " vallies, drinking water of the rain of heaven; a land which " the Lord thy God careth for: his eyes are always upon it, " from the beginning of the year, even to the end of the year." As the life and fragancy of vegetables depend on the influences of heaven, ſo do our graces upon Chriſt. And hence he is called, (1.) A root, Iſa. xi. 10. (2.) An head, Col. i. 18. (3.) A ſun, Mal. iv. 2. (4.) A fountain, Zech. xiii. 1. All which compariſons do fully carry this truth in them.

Conſid. 4. Laſtly, In this life of dependance lies your ſecurity; and indeed this is the great difference betwixt the two *covenants*. In the firſt, Adam's ſtock was in his own hands, and ſo his ſecurity or miſery depended upon the unconſtrained choice of his own mutable and ſelf-determining will. But now in the new covenant, all are to go to Chriſt, to depend upon him for ſupplies, and are ſo ſecured againſt all deſtructive dangers, Jude 1. 1 Pet. i. 5. Should you go forth in your own ſtrength againſt a temptation, either your grace would fail, and you fall in the conflict; or if you obtain any victory over it by your own ſtrength, yet it is a thouſand to one but your pride would conquer you, when you had conquered it: Like him that ſlew an *elephant*, but was himſelf ſlain by the fall of that *elephant* which he ſlew. But now, by this way, as God hath ſecured you againſt the dangers without; ſo alſo the frame and conſtitution of this new covenant is ſuch as prevents the danger ariſing from our own pride too. Not *Ego et Deus meus*: I and my God did this; as was once ſaid by a prophane mouth; " but ſelf is abaſed, and the Lord lifted up in his own " ſtrength," 1 Cor. iv. 7. And thus I have briefly evinced the neceſſity of this daily dependance.

But next it concerns you to know, what this dependance we ſpeak of is: this alſo I ſhall briefly open to you, laying down ſomewhat *negatively*, and ſomewhat *poſitively* about it.

1. *Negatively*. It is not to deny the grace wrought in us by the Spirit; this were both injuſtice and ingratitude; we may know our own graces ſo as to be thankful for them, though not ſo as to be proud of them, 1 Cor. xv. 10.

2. *Neg.* It is not a lazy excuſe from our duty: you do not *depend*, but rather *diſhonour* Chriſt by ſo doing; you muſt not ſay, becauſe Chriſt muſt do all, therefore I muſt do nothing: but rather work out your ſalvation, becauſe it is he that worketh both to will and to do, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Theſe are not *poſed*, but *ſubordinated*.

But then poſitively, it lies in three things.

1. *Poſitively.* In ſeeing and acknowledging the infinite ſufficiency and fulneſs that is in Chriſt: to acknowledge him to be all in all; not only by way of *impetration* procuring all, Heb. ix. 12. but alſo by way of *application*, bringing home to the ſoul all the bleſſings purchaſed by his blood, and ſettling us in the poſſeſſion of it, John xiv. 3. And ſo from firſt to laſt to eye him as the author and finiſher of our faith.

2. *Poſit.* In ſeeing the neceſſary dependance that all our graces have upon him. So that as you ſee the ſtream depending on the fountain, the beam upon the ſun, the branch upon the root, the building upon the foundation, even ſo do our graces upon Chriſt: on him they live, and cut off from him they die. "Our life is hid with Chriſt in God," Col. iii. 3. When you ſee this, and alſo ſee that all your activity, and ſtriving, is but as the hoiſting up of the ſails, in order to the motion of the ſhip, which can do nothing till there come a gale; when you look upon your grace as a creature that muſt be upheld, fed, acted, and preſerved by Chriſt, Col. ii. 19. then you are prepared for this act of dependance: As for inſtance, you can never depend upon Chriſt for the acting of that grace of hope, until you ſee Chriſt to be the prop and foundation of it, and that it depends upon him, as upon its cauſe, 1 Pet. i. 3. as upon its object, Heb. vi. 19. and as upon its *foundation* and groundwork, Col. i. 27.

You can never depend upon Chriſt for your joy and comfort, until you ſee what a neceſſary dependance this alſo hath upon him, Phil. iii. 3. and that, both as to its being and acting, John xvi. 22.

You can never depend upon him, for ſtrength in any duty, until you ſee how your duties depend upon Chriſt, not only for the *ſtrength* by which they are performed, John xv. 4, 5. but alſo for *acceptation* when they are performed, 1 Pet. ii. 5. It were eaſy to inſtance in any other grace.

(3.) It lies in * looking off from your own grace whenever you are put upon the acting of it, (I mean in regard of any dependance upon it) and looking by an eye of faith for acceptation to Chriſt, Heb. xii. 2. To the putting forth of which act of dependance upon Chriſt, holy ejaculations in our on-ſets upon duty, or thoſe quick and vigorous lifting up of our ſouls to God that way, are of ſpecial uſe, it being a duty fitted for the

* Αφορωντες εις τον της πιστεως αρχηγον. Looking off to the author of our faith.

purpoſe, when there is no room for ſet and ſolemn prayer. And thus briefly of its nature.

And to urge you to this duty, I ſhall offer theſe ſeven conſiderations: which, oh, that they might prevail upon your hearts, and make you for ever to claſp and cling about Chriſt more than ever you have done.

Conſideration 1. You have little reaſon to rely upon the ſtrength of your own graces, for you may be eaſily deceived in that matter, and think you have much more grace than you have. How often are the common gifts of the Spirit miſtaken for his ſpecial graces! the ſixth chapter to the Hebrews is able to make a man tremble in this thing.

Conſid. 2. Suppoſe you have much grace, yet have you not ſtrong corruptions, and may you not meet with ſtrong temptations alſo? He that hath leſs of other graces than you, may have more humility and ſelf-denial than you, and ſo may ſtand when you fall. Great enlargements are often attended with great temptations of pride, *&c.*

Conſid. 3. Whatever meaſures of grace you have arrived at, yet all is not able to ſecure you from falling, if God with-hold or with-draw his aids and influences. Abraham had more faith than you, and yet he fell into a ſin contrary to that very grace wherein he ſo excelled others, Gen. xx. 2. Job had more patience than you; which of you could behave yourſelves as he did, had you been in the like circumſtances as he was? chap. i. 2. he is renowned for it in the ſcripture, James v. 11. yet he fell into that ſin which is contrary to this grace alſo, chap. iii. Moſes had more *meekneſs* than you: "Now the man Moſes was the meekeſt man upon the earth." If you be but reproved, and that juſtly for your faults, how waſpiſh are you? Yet ſee how this grace failed even in him, in an eminent trial of it, Numb. xi. 13, 14, 15. Adam was much more advantaged in this reſpect than you, being made upright, and no corruption inherent in him, yet he fell: the *angels* more again, yet they fell. Oh when will you learn the vanity of ſelf-dependance.

Conſid. 4. Nothing more provoketh the Lord to withdraw his Spirit, and let you fall, than this ſin of ſelf-confidence doth, Luke xiv. 29, 30, 31. God will teach you by ſad experience your own weakneſs, and what frail and vain things you be, if you will learn it by no other means.

Conſid. 5. If God permit you to fall, (as doubtleſs he will, if you be ſelf-conceited), then the more eminent you have been, or are for grace, the more will the name of God be reproached

by your fall. This will furnish the triumphs of the uncircumcised, and the lamentations of your brethren, and make them say, "How are the mighty fallen!" What dismal consequents will attend your fall?

Consid. 6. Have you not sad experience of your own weakness from day to day in your lesser trials? Have you not said in some smaller conflicts, as David once did, "My feet had "well nigh slipt." O methinks this should teach you to look more to God, and less to self. "If you have run with foot-"men, and they have wearied you in the land of peace, *think* "*sadly how* you should contend with horses in the swellings of "Jordan." Do not you see that you are but feathers in the wind of temptation? Consult your former expetiences, and they will tell you what weaklings you are.

Consid. 7. Lastly, Hath Christ given you more grace than others, then how much more hath he obliged you to honour him thereby? And is this your requital of his love? What! to take the crown from his head, and put it upon your own! Certainly a greater injury cannot be done to Christ than this.

Well then, by all this be persuaded to cease from yourselves, yea, from your religious selves; and to all other your preparations, add this as a choice one; if you do these things, you shall never fall. And thus you see the complete Christian in his equipage for sufferings.

CHAP. XIV.

Containing the first use of the point by way of conviction, discovering the unreadiness of multitudes of professors for suffering-work.

YOU have seen, by all that hath been spoken, what the necessary pre-requisites unto a suffering condition are; and what manner of persons you must be, (both for habitual and actual readiness), if ever you honour Christ by bonds, or death for him. And I doubt not but your judgments and consciences yield to the evident necessity of these things, wherein I have placed the Christian's readiness. But, alas! where shall we find among the throngs and crowds of professors, any considerable numbers thus qualified and prepared? To suffer for Christ, is a gift that few have received. We are fallen into the dregs of time. Oh how little of primitive zeal and simplicity remains among the professors of this age! latter times

have produced a ſort of profeſſors of another ſtamp and ſpirit. Theſe have the *light*, but they had the *love*: theſe *ſee* more, but they *did* and *ſuffered* more. How many that are no ornament to religion, do adorn themſelves with the name of it!

Now, according to this account given of a ready Chriſtian, divers profeſſing perſons will be convicted of their unreadineſs and inability to manage ſuffering-work: As firſt,

1. The politic and hypocritical profeſſors, whoſe hearts were never *ſet right* at firſt, and therefore cannot be *ſtedfaſt* when trials come, Pſal. lxxviii. 8. Their hearts were never *ſound in God's ſtatutes*, and therefore no wonder if they be not only a *ſhame to*, but *aſhamed of* their profeſſion, Pſalm cxix. 80. Never wonder if you ſee that profeſſion which began in *hypocriſy*, to end in *apoſtacy*. Theſe want their habitual readineſs for ſufferings, and ſo cannot drink of that cup: Needs muſt they fall when tried; and when they fall, they fall dreadfully, and often irrecoverably; for they neither have the *ſeed of God in them*, nor any *promiſe* of God made to them.

And are there not many ſuch to be found in every place? For, (1.) How difficult is it to perſuade many of you to any duty that hath loſs or hazard attending on it? Doth not the ſincere heart ſtand inclinable and diſpoſed to all the known will of God? Pſalm cxix. 6. Do Chriſtians uſe to enquire more what is cheap, eaſy, and ſafe for them, or what is their duty? Gal. i. 16. Speak conſcience, for to thee do I appeal; art thou not conſcious of ſome reſerves, limitations, and exceptions? Doth not the man, like Naaman, deſire the Lord to excuſe and pardon him in this or that thing? 2 Kings v. 17. And thinkeſt thou that this is conſiſtent with ſincere obedience, which excepts no duty, nor quarrels with any command, becauſe they all flow equally from the ſovereignty of God, James ii. 11. and ſo doth what it doth *intuitu voluntatis*, upon the ſight of God's will. Say conſcience, are there not great ſtrugglings, diſputes, and conteſts betwixt thee, and fleſhly intereſts in ſuch caſes? And art thou not frequently over-borne? Oh ſearch your hearts in this particular.

Yea, *ſecondly*, I appeal to you, whether there be not many among you that chooſe ſin rather than affliction? This is always the hypocrite's option and choice: He judges ſufferings the greateſt evils, and ſo orders himſelf in his election. It was merely to avoid perſecution that thoſe hypocrites, Gal. vi. 12. conſtrained others to be circumciſed, only to gratify the Jews; that ſo, by a ſinful compliance with them, the offence of the croſs might ceaſe. If Paul would have done ſo, he might have

voided it too, but he durſt not whatever he ſuffered, Gal. v. 1. Oh this is a ſhrewd ſign of a falſe heart, Job xxxvi. 21. And the contrary diſpoſition is always found in the upright heart, Heb. xi. 25.

Nay, are there not ſome that have, and others that are ready to throw up their profeſſion, when they ſee into what difficulties it involves them? Whilſt they could live upon the profeſſion of truth, they entertained it; but when truth comes to live upon them, they thruſt it out, and cry, away with this profeſſion, it will beggar and undo us: They then repent of their forwardneſs, and ſecretly wiſh they had never engaged in it. O examine whether your hearts be not thus turned back, and your ſteps declined. If ſo, it is manifeſt you are hypocritical profeſſors, and that it was ſome outward ſelf-reſpect at firſt engaged you in your profeſſion, but can never enable you to hold out when difficult days come. I ſay it is manifeſt by this departure from your profeſſion, that ſome outward ſelf-reſpect at firſt allured you to it. As now, when I behold the artificial motions of the wheels in a *watch*, and ſee how regularly the needle marks the journal-hours of the ſun upon the flat of the *quadrant*, and ſee nothing that moves or guides it; it would cauſe admiration if I had never ſeen it before, or did not underſtand the cauſe and motion: but when I look upon the other ſide, and there find wheels, reſſorts, and counterpoiſes, and a ſpring that cauſes all thoſe motions, I ceaſe to wonder. Certainly ſome luſt or other was the ſpring of all thy religious motions; ſtop or take off that, and motion ceaſes: And if it be ſo, this *ſcab* of hypocriſy will at laſt break out into that *botch* of apoſtacy. Thou canſt never hold out long under trials, Matth. xiii. 21. Oh how many ſuch ſad ſights may we live to ſee as trials come! Difficult times are coming on, 2 Tim. iii. 1. And woe to ſuch then as want ſincerity at the bottom of their profeſſion.

2. And as theſe have no habitual readineſs for ſufferings, and, conſequently, muſt be ruined by them, ſo there are others that may be truly godly, and have the root of the matter in them, who are yet far from an actual readineſs, and ſo continuing, are like to be a reproach to religion when their trial comes; for it is not a little grace in the ſleepy habit that will ſecure you from falling ſcandalouſly by the hand of temptation: and although that ſeed of God which is in you, will recover you again, and prevent total and final apoſtacy, yet, Oh, conſider what a ſad thing it is to enter into, and be conquered

by temptation, to be led away in triumph by the tempter, and made a reproach to Christ. O it is a sad consideration to think how many there be amongst the people of God, that discover little or no actual preparation for sufferings: As, first,

1. Upon how many of the saints is the spirit of slumber poured out? Even the wise, as well as foolish, seem now to be asleep. There is a twofold spiritual sleep: the first is *total*, upon wicked men: and it is one of God's sorest and dreadfullest strokes upon their souls, Isa. xxix. 10. * The Hebrew word there is the same with that which is used of Adam, when God cast him into that deep sleep whilst he took out his rib. And in 2 Tim. ii. 26. it signifies such a sleep as that which is occasioned by drunkenness; out of such a sleep doth the Lord awaken all that are saved, and they never fall into it any more. The other is *partial*, Cant. v. 2, and is incident to the people of God, Matth. xxv. 5. This is nothing else but that torpor or sluggishness of Spirit which seizeth upon the saints, and never did it prevail, I fear, among them more, than now. For where is their activity for God? Where is he that *stirreth up* himself to take hold of God? Isa. lxiv. 7. Where is there such a generation as that, Psal. xxiv. 6.? We pray, confer, and hear, for the most part, but as men speak betwixt sleeping and waking. Where can you find, except here and there one, that hath a quick and lively sense of God's indignation upon him, or that trembles at his judgments? Is not that the very case of the most which God describes, Isa. xlii. *ult.*?

2. How many are seized by a private and worldly Spirit, every man turning to his own house, and eagerly pursuing the *world?* Hab. i. 9. Jer. xlv. 4, 5. Oh! how are we intangled in the wilderness? How doth the world eat up our time, and eat out our zeal; cowardize and soften our spirits, and render us utterly unfit for the yoke and burden of Christ? You that see so much beauty, and taste so much sweetness in the creature, you will have an hard task when called to deny it: You are not yet prepared to drink of the cup, or take up the cross of Christ.

3. How many poor Christians are of a low and timorous Spirit, ready to tremble at the shaking of a leaf? Ah poor hearts! how unfit are you for bonds or death! This passion of fear that so predominates in you, is the very passion which Satan assaults, and lays siege to in the hour of temptation, as was before noted: And commonly it is occasioned (where it flows

* רוח תרדמה. Αναισθησία.

not from the *natural conſtitution*) from an exceſſive love to the world, or from ſome guilt upon the ſpirit. It is true, the Lord can ſo aſſiſt weak faith, and ſo ſubdue ſtrong fears, as that you may be enabled to ſtand the ſhock when it comes: For, as I noted formerly, our ſtrength lies not in any thing inherent in us, but we are ſtrong or weak, according to the divine preſence and aſſiſtances that we enjoy). but yet if you labour not to mortify this evil, and ſtir not up yourſelves in the uſe of all appointed means, to rouze your zeal and courage for God, I know no warrant you have to expect ſuch aſſiſtances.

Laſtly, How many poor Chriſtians among us are to this day dark and cloudy in their evidences for heaven? Had they walked cloſely with God, been laborious in the diſquiſition and ſearch of their own hearts, they had long ſince obtained a clearneſs and ſatisfaction about the ſtate of their own hearts: But as the caſe ſtands with them, how unfit are they for bonds or death. Oh! it is a ſad caſe, when inward and outward troubles meet together, as you may ſee, Gen. xlii. 21, 22. when there ſhall be *fightings without*, and *fears within*: When ſuch a pang as that, Lam. iii. 17, 18. ſhall come over thy heart, what wilt thou do?

By all that hath been ſaid, it appears, that the moſt of profeſſors are in a very unready poſture for ſufferings; ſo that as troubles come to an height, we are like to ſee many ſad ſpectacles: Many offences will come; religion is like to be wounded in the houſe of its friends. Oh! what a day of mercy have we enjoyed? What helps and choice advantages, above any precedent age, and yet unready? How ſad and inexcuſable is this?

CHAP. XV.

Containing another uſe of the point, by way of exhortation, perſuading all the people of God, whilſt the Lord reſpites, and graciouſly delays their trials, to anſwer the end of God therein, and prepare themſelves for greater trials: where ſeveral motives are propounded, to excite to the duty.

UP then from your beds of ſloth, awake from your ſecurity, O ye ſaints, get upon your watch-towers, tremble in yourſelves, that ye may reſt in the day of evil, Hab. iii. 1, 3, 16. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be

" able to ſtand in the evil day, and when you have done all, " to ſtand," Eph. vi. 11. O let it never be ſaid of your dwellings, as it is of the tabernacles of the wicked, Job xxi. 9. " Their houſes are ſafe from fear."

Auguſtus hearing of one that was deeply in debt, who yet ſlept heartily, ſent for his pillow, ſuppoſing there was ſome ſtrange virtue in that pillow. I wonder what pillow you have gotten, O ye drowſy ſaints, that you can ſleep ſo quietly upon it, now that all things about you are conſpiring trouble, and threatening danger. Can you ſleep like Jonah, when ſeas of wrath are tumbling and roaring round about you, and threaten to entomb you and all your enjoyments? Behold, "The " ſtork in the heavens knows her appointed time," Jer. viii. 8. and hath not God made you *wiſer than the fowls of the air*, Job xxxv. 11. It may be the ſound of ſome preſent judgment may a little ſtartle you, like a ſudden clap of thunder in the air; but how ſoon doth ſloth and ſecurity prevail, and overcome you again. They ſay poiſon by being habituated, may be made innocent: We are ſo uſed to, or rather hardened under calamities, that nothing moves or effectually awakens us. Lord, what will the end of theſe things be? Wilt thou ſurprize thy people at unawares? Shall thy judgments find them *ſecure*, and leave them *deſperate?* O that God would perſuade you " to gather yourſelves together, yea, to gather together," (not in an unlawful and ſeditious way, but in the way of duty), " before the decree bring forth, and the day paſs as the chaff," Zeph. ii. 1, 2. O prepare to meet your God, Amos iv. 12. Prepare your *faith*, *love*, *courage*, &c. before God call you to the exerciſe of them.

And to excite you to this duty, beſides all the fore-mentioned benefits of a prepared ſpirit, conſider theſe following particulars by way of motive.

1. *Motive.* The many calls which God hath given you to this work. The Lord hath uttered his voice, and called from heaven unto you; will you be deaf to his calls? He hath called upon you, (1.) By the word: God would have it cry to you firſt, becauſe he would give the firſt honour to his word. He hath given all his prophets *one mouth*, Luke i. 70. and they have warned you faithfully. (2.) By the *rod*: this alſo hath a loud voice, Micah vi. 9. Pſalm ii. 5. Men of underſtanding will hear this voice; and thoſe that will not hear it, ſhall be laſhed by it even till they are ſick with ſmiting, verſe 13. (3.) By prodigious and protentous ſigns in the heavens and earth, ſuch as no age can parallel, theſe have a loud voice to all that

regard the works of the Lord, or the operations of his hands. Eusebius calls them *God's sermons to the world* *. Oh that we were wise to consider what God's ends are in these things! one observes, 'That as they are the plainest and most obvious 'to sense, so they are commonly the last sermons which God 'intends to preach to nations, before he inflicts his punish-'ment on them, if they repent not' O let not God, speaking in ordinary and extraordinary ways to you, still speak in vain.

Your preparation for sufferings, is the most probable means of preventing your fall and ruin by those sufferings.

2. *Motive.* Sufferings prove fatal and destructive to some; but it is to secure and careless ones: Such as are diligent and faithful in the use of God's means, are secured from the danger. Christ lays our constancy and perseverance very much upon our forecasting the worst that may fall out, Luke xiv. 28. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to "stand," Eph. vi. He that hath first severed Christ in his thoughts from all worldly advantages, and puts the case thus to his own soul, O my soul, canst thou embrace or love a naked Christ? Canst thou be content to be impoverished, imprisoned, and suffer the loss of all for him? He is most likely to cleave faithfully to him, when the case is really presented to him indeed. And can it seem a light thing in your eyes, to be enabled to stand in such an evil day? If you fall away from Christ, then all you have wrought is lost, Ezek. xxxiii. 13. Gideon's one *bastard* destroyed all his seventy sons. This act renders all former actions and professions vain. If you fall, you shall thereby be brought into a more perfect bondage to the devil than ever, Matth. xii. 23. Yea, ordinarily, apostates are judicially given up to be persecutors, Hosea v. 12. 1 Tim. i. 20. and are seldom or never recovered again by grace, Heb. vi. 4, 6. They that lick up their vomit, seldom cast it up any more. It is a fall within a little as low as the unpardonable sin, whence never any rise again. In some cases the *judge* will not allow the *offender* his book. And is it not then a choice and desireable mercy to escape and prevent such a fall as this? O good souls, ply your preparation-work close then; prepare, or you perish.

3. *Motive.* This will best answer the grace of God, in affording you such choice helps and advantages as you have enjoyed. How long have you enjoyed the free liberty of the gospel, shin-

* Τα τȣ Θεȣ κηρύγματα. *Euseb. hist. lib.* iii. *cap.* 8.

ing in its luſtre among you? This ſun, which to ſome other nations hath not riſen, and to divers on whom it hath ſhined, yet it is but as a winter's ſun, remote, and its beams but feeble; but you have lived, as it were, under the *line*, it hath been over your heads, and ſhed its richeſt influences upon you. Yea, God's miniſters, who are not only appointed to be *watchmen*, Ezek. iii. 16. but *trumpeters* to diſcover danger, Num. x. 8. Theſe have faithfully warned you of a day of trouble, and given you their beſt aſſiſtance to make you ready for it. And is not their joy, yea, life, bound up in your ſtability in ſuch a day of trial? Doth not every one call upon you in the words of the apoſtle, Phil. iv. 1. "Therefore, my brethren, dearly "beloved, and longed for, my joy and crown, ſo ſtand faſt "in the Lord, my dearly beloved." Will it not cut them to the very heart, if after all their ſpending labours among you, they ſtill leave you unready? enemies ſtill to the croſs of Chriſt, impoſſible to be reconciled and perſuaded to ſuffering-work for Chriſt.

I remember I have read of the Athenian Codrus, who being informed by the *oracle*, that the people whoſe king ſhould be ſlain in battle ſhould be conquerors: he thereupon diſrobed himſelf, and in a diſguiſe went into the enemies quarters, that he might ſteal a death to make his people victorious.

Oh! how glad would your miniſters be, if you might conquer and overcome in the day of temptation, whatever become of their lives and liberties! *Yea, and if they be offered up upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith, they can rejoice, and joy with you all.* Such is their zeal and longing after your ſecurity and welfare. But if ſtill you remain an unready people, and do become a prey to temptation, Oh how inexcuſable will you be!

4. *Motive.* Remember how ready the Lord Jeſus was to ſuffer the hardeſt and vileſt things for you. He had a bitter cup put into his hands to drink for you, into which the wrath both of God and man was ſqueezed out. Never had man ſuch ſufferings to undergo as Chriſt *, whether you conſider, (1.) The dignity of his perſon, who was in the form of God, and might have ſtood upon his *peerage* and equality with him; he is the *ſparkling diamond of heaven*, Acts vii. 56. the *darling* of the Father's ſoul, Iſa. xlii. 1. *glorious* as the only begotten of the Father, John i. 14. yea, glory itſelf, James ii. 1. yea, the very *brightneſs of glory*, Heb. i. 3. He is the *delicia*

* *Dolor Chriſti fuit major omnibus doloribus*, Aquin.

Christian orbis, fairer than the sons of men: And for him to be so debased, below so many thousands of his own creatures, *become a worm, and no man*; this was a wonderful humiliation. It was Jeremiah's lamentation, that such as were brought up in scarlet, embraced dunghills; that princes were hanged up by the hands, and the faces of elders were not reverenced: But what was that to the humiliation of the Lord of glory? Or, (2.) That he suffered in the prime and flower of his years; when full of life and sense, and more capable of exquisite sense of pain than others: for he was *optimæ complexionatus* †, of a singular constitution; and all the while he hanged on the tree, his sense of pain not at all blunted or decayed, Mark xv. 37, 39. Or, (3.) The manner of his death. It was the death of the cross, which was a *rack* to Christ: for in reference to the distention of his members upon the cross is that spoken, Psal. xxii. 17. "I may tell all my bones." Or, (4.) That all this while God hid his face from him. When Stephen suffered, he saw the heavens opened. The *martyrs* were many of them ravished and transported with extasies of joy in their sufferings; but Christ in the dark. He suffered in his soul as well as in his body; and the sufferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings. It was the Father's wrath that lay so heavy on him, as to put him into such an agony, that an instance was never given of the like nature: for he sweat θρόμβους, great drops, or clodders of blood, which fell from his body to the ground, Luke xxii. 44. "It amazed him, and made him "very heavy;" see Mark xiv. 33. yea, "sorrowful even to "death," Matth. xxvi. 38.

And yet, as bitter as the cup was, he freely and willingly drank it up, John xviii. 11. prepared himself to be offered up a sacrifice, Psal. xl. 6, 7. "gave his back to the smiters," Isa. l. 6. yea, longed exceedingly for the time till it came, Luke xii. 50.

Now, if Christ so chearfully prepared and addressed himself to such sufferings as these for you, should you not prepare yourselves to encounter any *difficulty* or *hardship* for him? O my brethren, doth not this seem a just and fair inference to you, from the sufferings of Christ for you? 1 Pet. iv. 1. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, "arm yourselves likewise with the same mind."

Oh, trifle no longer, feed not yourselves with fancies and

† *Aquinas.*

groundleſs preſumptions of immunity and peace, but foreſee difficulties, and fit yourſelves to bear them.

CHAP. XVI.

Containing the laſt uſe of the point, by way of ſupport and comfort to poor trembling ſouls, who do take pains to make themſelves ready for ſufferings; but yet finding ſuch ſtrength in Satan's temptations, and their own corruptions, fear that all their labour is in vain, and that they ſhall faint, and utterly apoſtatize, when their troubles and trials come to an height.

IN the laſt place, if it be ſuch a bleſſed thing to be ready in bonds, or death for Chriſt, this may miniſter much comfort to ſuch ſouls, who though they cannot ſay as Paul here did, that they are ready; yet are at work daily upon their own hearts to make them ready, and ſtrive, in the uſe of all means, to *conquer* thoſe corruptions that hinder it, and improve thoſe graces in which it mainly conſiſteth. O poor ſoul, whatever preſent unreadineſs or indiſpoſition thou findeſt, and complaineſt of in thine heart, yet thy condition is ſafe.

Objection. Oh! but I cannot be ſatisfied in that: I fear I ſhall be over-borne by temptations, when they come to an height. I have ſuch experience of the deceits and treacherouſneſs of my own heart, that it ſeems impoſſible to me to do as theſe bleſſed ſouls did, when I come to the like trials.

Solution. It is well thou ſuſpecteſt thine own heart, and trembleſt in thyſelf; this fear will keep thee waking, when others are ſecurely ſleeping. It was a good ſaying of a reverend miniſter, now with God, 'He that fears to flinch, ſhall never flinch for fear.' It is true, ſeeming grace may be totally loſt, Luke viii. 18. Heb. vi. 4, 5. 2 Pet. ii. 20. It is granted alſo, that the ſins of believers deſerve that God ſhould forſake them, and that he may ſuffer grace in them to be ſadly abated, and they may fall before a temptation, as Peter, and all the diſciples did: but that thou ſhalt never be ſeparated from Chriſt, or fall *totus à toto, in totum*, utterly away from God, thou mayeſt be abundantly ſatisfied, upon theſe five or ſix grounds. *Mr. A. H.*

1. From God's eternal electing love, wherewithal gracious ſouls are beloved and embraced, be their graces never ſo weak, or their corruptions never ſo ſtrong. This is immutable, Heb. vi. 18. and hence it is ſaid, Mark xiii. 22. "They ſhall deceive

* (if it were poſſible) the very elect." Now, this immutable purpoſe of God, is not founded upon any mutable ground or reaſon in thee, Rom. ix. 11. Yea, when he, Rom. viii. 29. elected thee, he ſaw what thou wouldſt be, and yet that hindered him not.

2. From the covenant of grace, in the boſom of which thou art wrapped up: this is all thy ſalvation, and all thy hope; it will afford thee abundant ſatisfaction, if thou do but weigh particularly theſe three things about it. 1. That the Author of this covenant is not a *fickle* creature, but a *faithful* God, with whom there is not *yea* and *nay*; with whom *there is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning*; whoſe gifts and callings are without repentance: ſo that once within this bleſſed covenant, and in it for ever. 2. That God hath eſtabliſhed the covenant with you in the blood of Chriſt; therefore the *ſacramental cup*, is called "the cup of the New Teſtament in his blood," Luke xxii. 20. The everlaſting merit and efficacy whereof, gives the ſoul of a believer the higheſt ſatisfaction imaginable. *Laſtly*, Add to this, that in this covenant God hath undertaken for us, as well as for himſelf: ſo that what is a *condition* in one ſcripture, is the matter of a *promiſe* in another, Jer. xxxii. 40.

3. From that ſtrict and intimate union that is betwixt Chriſt and thee. And hence it is impoſſible thou ſhouldeſt be loſt. For, 1. Thy union with his perſon, brings intereſt in his properties along with it. Whatever he is, or hath, it is for thee: his eye of knowledge, arm of power, bowels of pity, it is all for thee.

2. This union with his perſon, ſecures thy feeble graces from periſhing, John iv. 14. Thy graces have an everlaſting ſpring. Whilſt there is ſap in this root, it will aſcend into the branches.

3. It implies thy perſeverance, becauſe by this union thou becomeſt an integral part of Chriſt's body, which would be mutilate and defective, ſhouldſt thou be *cut* off and loſt.

4. From the prevalent interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt in the heavens, for all his ſaints, in all their trials here on earth. From hence the apoſtle infers the certainty of our perſeverance, Rom. viii. 34. and a pregnant inſtance of it you have in Peter's caſe, Luke xxii. 32. So Heb. vii. 25. ſpeaks fully to the caſe. To ſtrengthen this, conſider, 1. Who it is that intercedes: It is Chriſt, whoſe perſon is moſt dear and ingratiated with the Father, John xi. 42. 2. What he intercedes for: Surely for nothing but what is moſt ſuitable to his Father's will. The

will of Chriſt, and his Father's do not claſh, John xvi. 26, 27; yea, what he prays for, he prays not for *gratis*, or aſks upon any diſhonourable terms to the juſtice of his Father; but they are all mercies purchaſed and paid for; and therefore fear not the failing of your graces.

5. From the Spirit of Chriſt which dwelleth and abideth in thee, and hath begun his ſaving work upon thee. I ſay, *ſaving*, for elſe it would afford no argument. His common works on hypocrites come to nothing, but in thee they cannot fail. For, 1. His honour is pledged and engaged to perfect it. That reproach of the fooliſh builder ſhall never lie upon him, that he began to build, but could not finiſh. Beſides, this would make void all that the Father and the Son have done for thee; both their works are complete and perfect in their kinds, and the Spirit is the laſt efficient in order of working. 2. Beſides, the grace he hath already wrought in thee, may give thee *yet further* and fuller aſſurance of its preſervation, inaſmuch as it hath the nature of a *ſeal*, *pledge*, and *earneſt* of the whole, Rom. viii. 23. 2 Cor. i. 22. So that it cannot fail.

6. From thoſe multitudes of *aſſertory*, *promiſſory*, and *comparative* ſcriptures, the rich veins whereof run through the book of God, as ſo many ſtreams to refreſh thy ſoul. Of *aſſertory* ſcriptures, ſee John vi. 39. John 10, 28. 1 John iii. 19. Of *promiſſory* ſcriptures, ſee Iſa. liv. 10. Jer. xxxii. 40. 1 Cor. i. 8, *&c.* Of *comparative* ſcriptures, ſee Pſal. i. 3. Pſal. cxxv. 1. John iv. 14. *&c.* The principal ſcope of all which is to ſhew the indefectible nature of true grace in the ſaints.

And now, how ſhould this refreſh thy drooping ſoul, make thee gird up the loins of thy mind, ſince thou doſt "not run "as one uncertain, neither fighteſt as one that beats the air," 1 Cor. ix. 26, but art ſo ſecured from total apoſtacy, as thou ſeeſt thou art by all theſe things. O bleſs ye the Lord.

Obj. 3. But the Lord ſeems to be departed from my ſoul; God is afar off from me, and troubles are near. I ſeem to be in ſuch a caſe as Saul was when the Philiſtines made war upon him, and God was *departed* from him; and therefore I ſhall fall.

Sol. Not ſo; for there are two ſorts of Divine deſertions; the one is *abſolute*, when the Lord utterly forſakes his creatures, ſo that they ſhall never behold his face more: The other is *limited* and *reſpective*, and ſo he forſook his own Son, and often does his own *elect*: and of this kind, ſome are only *cautional*, to prevent ſin; ſome are merely *probational*, to

thy grace; and others *castigatory*, to chastise our negligence and carelessness. Now, though I have not a word of comfort to speak in the case of total and absolute desertions; yet of the latter (which doubtless is thy case) much may be said by way of support, be it of which of the three sorts it will, or in what degree it will. For, 1. This hath been the case of many precious souls, Psal. xxii. 1, 2. Psal. lxxvii. 2. Psal. lxxxviii. 9. Job xiii. 24, 25, 26. This was poor Mr. Glover's case, as you will find in his story, and it continued till he came within sight of the stake; therefore no new or strange thing hath happened to you.

2. The Lord by this will advantage thee for perseverance, not only as they are cautional against sin, but as they make thee hold Christ the faster, and prize his presence at an higher rate, when he shall please Cant. iii. 4. graciously to manifest himself to thee again.

3. This shall not abide for ever: it is but a little cloud, and will blow over. It is but for a *moment*, and that moment's darkness ushers in everlasting light, Isa. liv. 7.

Yea, lastly, the light of God's countenance shall not only be restored *certainly*, but it shall be restored *seasonably*; when the darkness is *greatest*, thy troubles at the *highest*, and thy hopes *lowest*. He is a God of judgment, and knows how to time his own mercies, Psal. cxxxviii. 3.

Obj. 3. But I am a weak woman, or a young person, how shall I be able to confess Christ before *rulers*, and look great ones in the face?

Sol. Christ delights to make his power known in such, 2 Cor. xii. 9. for he affects not social glory.

2. "Thou shalt be holden up, for God is able to make thee "stand," Rom. xiv. 4. Thou that art sensible of thine own infirmity, mayest run to that promise.

3. Such poor weak creatures shall endure when stronger (if self-confident) fall, Isa. xl. 30, 31. "Even the youths shall "faint, and be weary, and the young men utterly fall. But "they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength: "they shall mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be "weary, walk and not faint."

Youths, and young men, are bold, daring, and confident persons, that trust to their own strength; to whom such as wait upon the Lord stand here opposed; they shall faint, but these shall renew their strength.

Art thou one that waitest and dependest upon an all-suffici-

ent God, in the ſenſe of thine own weakneſs? This promiſe then is for thee.

4. You may furniſh yourſelves at pleaſure, with examples of the mighty power of God reſting upon ſuch as you are, out of our own martyrology.

Thomas Drowry, the poor blind boy, Fox, vol. 3. p. 703. What a preſence of ſpirit was with him, when examined by the Chancellor!

Eulalia, a virgin of about 12 years of age, ſee how ſhe was acted above thoſe years, yea, above the power of nature. Fox, vol. 1. p. 120. Tender women, yea, children, act above themſelves, when aſſiſted by a ſtrong God.

And thus you have ſome help offered you by a weak hand, in your preſent and moſt important work.

The Lord carry home all with power upon your hearts, that if God call you to ſuffer for him, you may ſay as Paul did, "I "am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure "is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my "courſe, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for "me a crown of righteouſneſs, which God the righteous Judge "ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to them "alſo which love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. And as you expect ſo to finiſh your courſe with joy; be diligent in the uſe of all means, to prepare and make yourſelves ready to follow the call of God, whether it be to bonds, or to death, for the name of the Lord Jeſus.

THE BALM OF THE COVENANT Applied to the BLEEDING WOUNDS OF AFFLICTED SAINTS.

To which is added, a Sermon preached for the Funeral of that excellent and religious Gentleman JOHN UPTON of LUPTON, Esq;

To the Virtuous and Much Honoured Madam, URSULA UPTON of LUPTON in DEVON.

MADAM,

IF I find it an hard task to write on such a doleful subject, it cannot be imagined but your part must be abundantly harder, who feel over and over what is here written. Could I tell how to administer counsels, and comforts to you, without exasperating your sorrows, I would certainly take that way; but seeing the one (in this case) cannot be done without the other, it is our duty to submit to the method Providence hath prescribed to us.

The design of the ensuing discourse, is to evince the truth of what seems a very great paradox to most men, namely, that the afflictions of the saints can do them no hurt, and that the wisdom of men and angels cannot lay one circumstance of their condition (how uneasy soever it seems to be) better, or more to their advantage than God hath laid it. I attempt not by a flourish of rhetoric to persuade you against the demonstrations you can fetch from sense and feeling to the contrary, but to overthrow the false reasonings of flesh and sense, by the allowed rules of Scripture, and sure principles of religion.

And methinks you, and every Christian, should gladly enter-

tain that comfortable concluſion, when you ſhall find the foundation of it as *ſtrong*, as the influences thereof are *ſweet* and comfortable.

Certainly, Madam, the intent of the Redeemer's undertaking was not to purchaſe for his people riches, eaſe, and pleaſures on earth; but to mortify their luſts, heal their natures and ſpiritualize their affections; and thereby to fit them for the eternal fruition of God. Upon this ſuppoſition the truth of this concluſion (how ſtrange ſoever it ſeems) is firmly built.

It was not without Divine direction, that the ſubject of the enſuing diſcourſe was as pertinently, as ſeaſonably, recommended to me by your dear huſband, in the day of your ſorrows for your only ſon. He took, I hope, his portion of comfort out of it before he died, and it is now left as a ſpring of comfort to you, who then mourned with him, and now for him.

Heavy preſſures call for ſtrong ſupport, and fainting ſeaſons for rich cordials. Your burden is indeed heavy: yet I muſt ſay it is much our own fault our burdens are ſo heavy as we feel them to be; for according to the meaſure of our delight in, and expectation from the creature, is our ſorrow and diſappointment when we part from it. The higheſt *tides* are always followed with the loweſt *ebbs*. We find temperance and patience knit together in the ſame *precept*, and intemperance and impatience as inſeparably connected in our own *experience*. It may be we did not ſuſpect ourſelves of any ſinful exceſs in the time of their enjoyment; but it now appears the creature was gotten deeper into our hearts than we imagined by the pain we feel at parting: Did we not lean too hard upon it, there would not be ſuch ſhakings as we feel when it is ſlipt from us.

But, Madam, it is high time to recal your thoughts, and bound your ſorrows, which the following conſiderations would greatly aſſiſt you in.

1. What is the very ground and reaſon of our exceſſive ſorrows for the loſs of earthly comforts? Is it not this, That they are *periſhing* and *tranſitory*? That is, that you find them to be as God made them. And can we expect that God ſhould alter the laws of nature to pleaſe and humour us? It is as natural to our relations to die, as it is for *flowers* to wither, or the *moon* to wane.

2. That there is no ſuch neceſſary connexion betwixt theſe things and our comfort, that whenever God removes the one,

he muſt needs remove the other with it. Chriſt and comfort are indeed ſo united, but nothing beſide him is or can be ſo. I hope you will ſhortly experience the truth of this concluſion, by the comfort God will give you in the abſence of thoſe comforts you have loſt. Can you not now have as free acceſs to God as before? Yea, do not theſe very afflictions ſend you oftener into his preſence? And if God meet you in thoſe duties, (as in days of diſtreſs he uſes to meet his people), then it will be evident to you that your joy and comfort lives, though your huſband and children be laid in their graves.

3. That the removing of your earthly comforts hinders not but that you may ſtill purſue the great end and buſineſs of your life, and carry on all your deſigns for heaven as ſucceſsfully as ever. Indeed, Madam, had we been ſent into this world to raiſe eſtates, contract relations, and then ſit down in the midſt of them as our portion, then our deſign had been utterly daſhed and diſappointed; but you know this is not your main end, or great buſineſs upon earth, but to honour God by an holy fruitful life here, and make ready for the full enjoyment of him hereafter. And what hinders but you may as proſperouſly manage and carry on this your deſign as ever? You do not think the traveller is diſabled for his journey, becauſe he hath fewer clogs and hindrances than before. I think few Chriſtians find much furtherance heavenward by their multiplicity of engagements or enjoyments in this world. Your cares and fears about theſe things, will now lie in a narrower compaſs than they did before, and thereby you may have your thoughts more about you, to attend the great concerns of God's glory, and your own ſalvation.

4. But above all, you will certainly find your relief and conſolation to lie in the everlaſting covenant of God. Thence it was, that David fetched his ſupport under a much heavier burden and ſmarter rod than yours: For your relations were ſuch as gave you comfort in their lives, and left you many grounds of hope in their deaths: but his were taken away in their ſins. But though the grounds of his ſorrow (bleſſed be God) are not yours, yet I hope the grounds of his comfort in the text are fully yours.

I confeſs, I have prepared theſe things in too much haſte and diſtraction of thoughts, which in this juncture was unavoidable; nor have I beſtowed much of art or language upon them: And if I had, they would have been never the more effectual to your relief for that. But ſuch as they are, I

humbly preſent them to you, with my hearty prayers, that God would make them a *ſovereign balm*, by the bleſſing of his Spirit on them, to your wounded ſpirit, and to all other godly families groaning under the like ſtrokes of God with you, and remain,

M A D A M,

Your moſt faithful,

ſympathizing friend and ſervant,

JOHN FLAVEL.

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2 SAM. xxiii. 5. *Although my houſe be not ſo with God; yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure: for this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, although he make it not to grow.*

THESE are part of David's laſt words. The laſt words of dying *ſaints*, but eſpecially of dying *prophets*, are ponderous, memorable, and extraordinarily remarkable; and ſuch are theſe acknowledged to be, by all expoſitors: It is a golden ſentence, a divine oracle, fit to be the laſt words of every dying ſaint, as well as of David.

They are called his *laſt words*, not ſimply, and abſolutely, as though he breathed them forth with his laſt breath; (for he ſpake many things afterwards) but either they are the laſt he ſpake as a *prophet*, by Divine inſpiration, or becauſe he had them often in his mouth, to his laſt and dying day. They were his *epicedium*, his ſweet *ſwan*-like ſong, in which his ſoul found ſingular refreſhment, and ſtrong ſupport, amidſt the manifold afflictions of his life, and againſt the fears of his approaching death.

The whole chapter is deſigned for a *coronis* or honourable cloſe of the life of David, and gives us an account both of the worthy expreſſions that dropped from him, and of the renowned worthies that were employed by him: But all the *heroic* atchievements recorded to the honour of their memories, in the following part of the chapter, are trivial and inglorious things, compared with this one divine ſentence recorded in my text; in which we have two things to conſider, *viz.*

1. The preface, which is exceeding ſolemn.
2. The ſpeech itſelf, which is exceeding weighty.

1. In the preface, we have both the inſtrumental and prin-

cipal efficient cauſe of this divine ſentence diſtinctly ſet down, ver. 1. and the efficient, or author of it, ver. 2.

The inſtrument or organ of its conveyance to us, was David; deſcribed by his deſcent or lineage, *the Son of Jeſſe*; by his eminent ſtation, *the man that was raiſed up on high*, even to the top and culminating point of civil and ſpiritual dignity and honour, both as a *king*, and as a *prophet*; by his *divine unction, the anointed of the God of Jacob*; and laſtly, by the flowing ſweetneſs of his ſpirit and ſtile, in the divine pſalms that were penned by him, whence he here gets the title of *the ſweet pſalmiſt of Iſrael, the pleaſant one, in the pſalms of Iſrael*, as ſome read it.

The *principal efficient cauſe* of this excellent paſſage, is here likewiſe noted, and all to commend it the more to our ſpecial obſervation and acceptance: "The Spirit of God ſpake by me, "and his word was in my tongue." This ſtamps my text expreſsly with divine authority. The Spirit of God ſpake by David, he was not the Author, but only the Scribe of it. Thus the enſuing diſcourſe is prefaced. Let us next ſee,

2. The matter or ſpeech itſelf, wherein we ſhall find the maxims, and general *rules* of government preſcribed, and the *felicity* of ſuch a government elegantly deſcribed: "He that "ruleth over men muſt be juſt, ruling in the fear of God." Princes being in God's place, muſt exalt the righteouſneſs of God, in the government of men; and when they do ſo, they ſhall be as the light of the morning when the ſun riſeth, even a morning without clouds, *&c.* What halcyon days ſhall that happy people ſee, whoſe lot is caſt into ſuch times and places! All this is typically ſpoken of David, and thoſe pious princes who ſucceeded him; but myſtically and eminently points at Chriſt, who was to riſe out of David's ſeed, Rom. i. 3. and to ſit upon his throne, Acts ii. 30. So that in this he was raiſed on high, to an eminency of glory and dignity indeed: he was ſo in his ordinary natural ſeed; a royal race, deriving itſelf from him, and ſitting upon his throne in a lineal ſucceſſion, till the Babyloniſh captivity, which was about four hundred and thirty years. And after that, the Jews had governors of his line, at leaſt rightful heirs to that crown, till the promiſed Meſſiah came. But that which was the top of David's honour, the moſt ſparkling jewel in his crown, was this, that the Lord Jeſus was to deſcend from him, according to the fleſh, in whom all the glorious characters before given, ſhould not only be exactly anſwered, but abundantly exceeded. And thus you find the na-

tural line of the Meſſiah is drawn down by Matthew, from David to the virgin Mary, Matth. i. And his legal line by Luke, from David to Joſeph, his ſuppoſed father, Luke ii. 23.

Now, though the illuſtrious marks and characters of ſuche righteous, ſerene, and happy government, did not fully agree to his day, nor would do ſo in the reigns of his ordinary natural ſucceſſors, his day was not without many clouds both of ſin and trouble; yet ſuch a bleſſed day he foreſaw and rejoiced in, when Chriſt, the extraordinary ſeed of David, ſhould ariſe, and ſet up his kingdom in the world, and with the expectation hereof, he greatly cheers and encourages himſelf: "Although my houſe be not ſo with God, yet hath he made "with me an everlaſting covenant," &c. In which words four things are eminently remarkable.

1. Here is a ſad confeſſion of domeſtic evils.
2. A ſingular relief, from God's covenant with him.
3. The glorious properties of this covenant diſplayed.
4. The high eſteem and dear regard his houſe had unto it.

1. Here is David's ſad and mournful confeſſion of the evil of his houſe, both *moral* and *penal*. "Altho' my houſe be not "ſo with God," *i. e.* neither ſo holy, nor ſo happy, as this deſcription of a righteous and flouriſhing government imports; alas! it anſwers not to it: For though he was eminent for godlineſs himſelf, and had ſolemnly dedicated his houſe to God, Pſal. xxx. as ſoon as it was built, yea, though he piouſly reſolved to walk in the midſt of it with a perfect heart, and not to ſuffer an immoral perſon within his walls; yet great miſcarriages were found even in David's houſe and perſon, which God chaſtiſed him for, by a thick ſucceſſion of ſharp and ſore afflictions, Pſalm ci. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Tamar was defiled by her brother Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 13. Amnon was barbarouſly murdered thereupon, by the advice of Abſalom, 2 Sam. xiii. 28. Abſalom unnaturally rebels againſt his father David, and drives him out of the royal city, and periſhes in that rebellion, 2 Sam. xv. 1. then Adonijah, another darling-ſon, graſps at the crown ſettled by David upon Solomon, and periſhes for that his uſurpation, 1 Kings ii. 25. O what a heap of miſchiefs and calamities did this good man live to ſee within his own walls, beſides the many foreign troubles that came from other hands! How many flouriſhing branches did God lop off from him, and that in their ſins too? So that his day was a day of clouds, even from the morning unto the evening of it; Pſal. cxxxii. 1. "Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions." Well might he ſay, "his houſe was not ſo with God."

But what then, doth he faint and despond under these manifold calamities? Doth he refuse to be comforted, because his children are gone, and all things involved in trouble? No, but you find,

2. He relieves himself by the *covenant* God had made with him: "Yet hath he made with me a covenant." He looks to Christ, "There is more in the covenant than this my house be-"fore God," as the Chaldee turns it. This little word *yet*, wraps up a great and sovereign cordial in it. Though Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah be gone, and gone with many smarting aggravations too; "yet hath he made with me a cove-"nant," yet I have this sheet-anchor left to secure me. God's covenant with me, in relation to Christ, this under-props and shores up my heart.

This covenant was, without controversy, a gospel-covenant. It was David's gospel: For all his salvation and all his desire were in it; which could never be, except Christ had been in it, who is the salvation of all the ends of the earth, and the desire of all nations.

It is true, it was a more obscure and imperfect edition of the *covenant of faith*, yet clearer than those that were made before it; it came not up to the fulness and clearness of the discoveries made by Jeremy and Ezekiel*: But yet in this covenant with David, God revealed more of Christ, than had been ever revealed before; for the light of Christ, like that of the morning, increased still more and more, till it came to a perfect day. It is worthy our observation, how God made a gradual discovery of Christ from Adam, down along to the New-Testament times. It was revealed to Adam, that he should be the *seed of the woman* but not of what nation, till Abraham's time; nor of what *tribe*, till Jacob; nor of what *sex* and *family*, till David; nor that he should be born of a virgin, till Isaiah; nor in what *town*, till Micah. The first revelation of this covenant with David, was by Nathan the prophet; 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13, 14. afterwards enlarged and confirmed, Psalm lxxxix. By it he knew much of Christ, and wrote much of him. He spake of his *person*, Psalm xlv. 6, 11. Psalm viii. 4, 5, 6. of his offices, both *prophetical*, Psalm xl. 8, 9, 10. *priestly*, Psalm cx. 4. and *kingly*, Psalm ii. 6. of his incarnation, Psal. viii. 5. of his death on the cross, Psalm xxii. 16, 17. of his burial, Psalm xvi. 8, 9, 10. resurrection, Psalm ii. 7. and triumphant ascension, Psalm lxviii. 18. there was the sum of the gospel discover-

* *Plus est quam hæc domus mea ante Deum*, Joo.

ed, though in dark and typical terms and forms of expreſſion; but if out of this covenant, as obſcure as its revelation was, David fetched ſuch ſtrong ſupport and conſolation, amidſt ſuch a heap of troubles, then the argument is good *a fortiori*: What ſupport and comfort may we not draw thence, who live under the moſt full and perfect diſplay of it, in all its riches and glory; enough hath been ſaid to prove it a goſpel-covenant; but if any doubt ſhould remain of that, it will be fully removed, by conſidering,

3. The eximious properties and characters of the covenant, as we find them placed in the text; and they are three, *viz.*

(1.) Everlaſting.

(2.) Ordered in all things, and

(3.) Sure.

(1.) It is an *everlaſting covenant*, or a perpetual covenant, *a covenant of eternity*, * not in the moſt ſtrict, proper, and abſolute ſenſe: For that is the incommunicable property of God himſelf, who neither hath beginning, nor end; but the meaning is, that the benefits and mercies of the covenant are durable and endleſs to the people of God: For Chriſt being the principal matter and ſubſtance of the covenant, there muſt be in it an everlaſting righteouſneſs, as it is called, Dan. ix. 24. everlaſting kindneſs, Iſa. liv. 8. everlaſting forgiveneſs, Jer. xxxi. 34. and in conſequence to all theſe, everlaſting conſolation, Iſa. li. 11. in all which the riches and bounty of free grace ſhine forth in their greateſt glory and ſplendor.

(2.) It is a covenant *ordered in all things*, or orderly prepared, diſpoſed, and ſet, as the word imports †. Every thing being here diſpoſed and placed in the moſt comely order, both perſons and things here keep their proper place: God the Father keeps the place of the moſt wiſe contriver and bountiful donor of the invaluable mercies of the covenant; and Chriſt keeps the proper place both of the purchaſer and ſurety of the covenant; and all the mercies in it; and believers keep their place, as the unworthy receivers of all the gratuitous mercies and rich benefits thereof, and the moſt obliged creatures in all the world to free grace, ſaying, although my houſe, yea, although my heart and my life be not ſo with God, yet hath he made with me an everlaſting covenant. And as *perſons*, ſo *things*, all things in this covenant ſtand in the moſt exquiſite order, and exact correſpondence to each other. O it is a ra-

* ברית עולם διαθηκη αιωνιος, *i. e.* A covenant of age.

† *A* ערך *ordinavit, diſpoſuit, aptavit.*

vishing sight to behold the habitude and respect of the mercies in the covenant, to the sins and wants of all that are in it! Here are found full and suitable supplies to the wants of all God's people. Here you may see *pardon* in the covenant, for *guilt* in the soul; *joy* in the covenant, for sorrow in the *heart*; *strength* in the covenant, for all defects and weaknesses in the creature; *stability* in the covenant, for the mutability in the creature. Never did the wisdom of God shine forth more in any contrivance in the world, (except that of Christ, the surety and principal matter of the covenant) than it doth in the orderly dispose of all things in their beautiful order, and comely proportions in this covenant of grace.

(3.) It is *a sure covenant*, or a covenant safely laid up and kept, as the word imports *; and upon this account the mercies of it are called, "The sure mercies of David," Isa. lv. 3. And so Psalm lxxxix. 28. speaking of this very covenant, God saith, "My covenant shall stand fast with him;" there shall be no vacillancy, no shaking in this covenant: and ver. 34. "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is "gone out of my lips." Every thing is as its foundation is. Now, God's covenant being founded in his unchangeable counsel and purpose, wherein there can be no lubricity, and Christ being the surety of it, it must needs be, as the text calls it, a sure covenant, wherein the faithfulness of God is as illustriously displayed, as his bounty and wisdom are in the two former properties of it. And such a covenant as this, so everlasting, aptly disposed, and sure, must needs deserve that precious respect and high esteem from every believing soul, which David here doth pay it, in

4. The singular and high valuation he had of it, when he saith, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire," or as some translate † "all my delight, or pleasure;" (*i. e.*) here I find all repaired with an infinite overplus, that I have lost in the creature: Here is life in death, fulness in wants, security in dangers, peace in troubles. It is *all my salvation*; for it leaves nothing in hazard that is essential to my happiness; and *all my desire*, for it repairs whatever I have lost, or can lose: It is so full and complete a covenant, that it leaves nothing to be desired out of it. O it is a full fountain! Here I repose my weary soul with full satisfaction, and feed my hungry desires with sweetest delights; so that my very soul is at rest and ease, in the bosom of this blessed covenant. Thus you have the

* *A* שמר *custodivit, servavit.* † זכל הפצ.

parts and ſenſe of the text. The notes from it are three

Obſervation 1. *That God's covenant people may be exerciſed with many ſharp afflictions in their perſons and families*, Eccl. ix. 9.

Even David's houſe was the houſe of mourning; "Although "my houſe be not ſo with God, though he make it not to "grow." All ſorts of outward afflictions are incident to all ſorts of men. "All things (ſaith Solomon) come alike to all: "There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to "the clean, and unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him "that ſacrificeth not." The providences ſeem one and the ſame, though the ſubject on whom they fall be vaſtly different. Eſtates and children, health and liberty, will ſtill be like themſelves, vaniſhing comforts, whoever be the owners of them. No man's ſpiritual eſtate can be known by the view of his temporal eſtate. A godly family cannot be a *miſerable*, but it may be a *mournful* family. Religion ſecures us from the *wrath*, but it does not ſecure us from the *rod* of God. The Lord hath choſen another way of expreſſing his love to his people, than by temporal and external things: Therefore "all things "come alike to all." The covenant excludes the *curſe*, but includes the *croſs*. "If his children forſake my law, &c. then "will I viſit their iniquity with the rod, and their ſin with "ſtripes: nevertheleſs my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly "take away."

Nor indeed would it be the privilege of God's covenanted people, to be exempt from the rod; a mark of *baſtardy* can be no man's felicity, Heb. xii. 8. to go without the chaſtiſing diſcipline of the rod, were to go without the needful inſtructions and bleſſed fruits that accompany and reſult from the rod, Pſalm xciv. 12.

Let us not therefore ſay, as thoſe irreligious perſons did in Mal. iii. 14. "It is in vain to ſerve God, and what profit is it "that we have kept his ordinances, and walked mournfully "before him?" Surely none ſerve him *in vain*, but thoſe that ſerve him *vainly*. Godlineſs cannot ſecure you from affliction, but it can and will ſecure you from hell, and ſanctify your afflictions to help you to heaven. But I ſtay not here.

Obſervation 2. *A declining family is a ſore ſtroke from the hand of God, and ſo to be acknowledged, wherever it falls.*

It was a growing ſorrow to David, that his houſe did not grow; and he eyed the hand of God in it, "He made it not to "grow," as he ſpeaks in the text. He felt as many deaths as he had dead children. It is God that *builds* and deſtroys fami-

ties; he enlargeth and straiteneth them again. A family may decline two ways, *viz.* either,

1. By the death: or,
2. By the degeneracy of its offspring.

1. By their death, when God lops off the hopeful springing branches thereof; especially the last and only prop of it, in whom not only all the care and love, but all the hope and expectation of the parents is contracted and bound up. For,

The hearts of tender parents are usually bound up in the life of an only son *. As a man's wife is but himself divided, so his children are but himself multiplied; and when all love and delight, hope and expectation, is reduced to one, the affection is strong, and that makes the affliction so too. If it were not an unparalleled grief among all earthly griefs and sorrows, the Spirit of God would never have chosen and singled it out from among all other sorrows, to illustrate sorrow for sin by it, yea, sorrows for that special sin of piercing Christ, as he doth, Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon him whom they "have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as one that mourn-"eth for an only son." How naked are those walls, and how unfurnished is that house, where the children (its best ornaments) are taken down and removed by death? It is natural to all men, to desire the continuance of their names and families in the earth; and therefore when God cuts off their expectations in that kind, they look upon themselves as dry trees, or as the withering stalks in the fields, when the flowers are fallen off, and blown away from them.

2. Or, which is yet much worse, a family may decline by the degeneracy of its off-spring. When the piety, probity, and virtues of ancestors descend not with their lands to their posterity, here the true line of honour is cut off, and the glory of a family dies, though its children live; the family is ruined, though there be a numerous offspring. Surely it were better mourn for ten dead children, than for one such living child.

How many such wretched families can England shew this day! How hath Atheism and debauchery ruined and subverted many great and once famous families! O it were better the *arms* of those families had been reversed, and their lands alienated, yea, better had it been a succession had failed, and that their names had been blotted out, than that Satan should rule by profaneness in the places where God was once so seriously and sweetly worshipped.

* *Omnis in ascanio stat chari cura parentis.* Virgil.

Whenſoever therefore God ſhall either of theſe ways ſubvert a family, it becomes them that are concerned in the ſtroke, not only to own and acknowledge the hand of God in it, but to ſearch their hearts and houſes, to find out the ſins which have ſo provoked him; yet not ſo as to fall into an unbecoming deſpondency of ſpirit, but withal to relieve themſelves, as David here doth, from the covenant of God; "Yet hath he "made with me an everlaſting covenant." Which brings us to the third and principal point I ſhall inſiſt on.

Obſerv. 3. *That the everlaſting, well-ordered, and ſure covenant of grace, affords everlaſting, well-ordered, and ſure relief to all that are within the bond of it, how many or how great ſoever their perſonal or domeſtic trials and afflictions are.*

This point will be cleared to your underſtandings, and prepared for your uſe, by clearing and opening three propoſitions, which orderly take up the ſum and ſubſtance of it, *viz.*

Propoſition 1. *That the minds of men, yea, the beſt men, are weak and feeble things under the heavy preſſures of affliction, and will reel and ſink under them, except they be ſtrongly relieved and under-propped.*

A bowing wall doth not more need a ſtrong ſhore or *butreſs*, than the mind of a man needs a ſtrong ſupport and ſtay from heaven, when the weight of affliction makes it incline and lean all one way. "Unleſs thy law had been my delights, "I ſhould then have periſhed in my affliction," Pſal. cxix. 92. *q. d.* What ſhift other men make to ſtand the ſhock of their afflictions, I know not; but this I know, that if God had not ſeaſonably ſent me the relief of a promiſe, I had certainly gone away in a faint fit of deſpondency. O how ſeaſonably did God adminiſter the cordials of his word to my drooping ſinking ſoul!

This weakneſs in the mind, to ſupport the burdens of affliction, proceeds from a double cauſe, *viz.*

1. From the ſinking weight of the affliction.

2. From the irregular and inordinate workings of the thoughts of it.

1. From the ſinking weight that is in affliction, eſpecially in ſome ſorts of afflictions: they are heavy preſſures, ponderous burdens in themſelves. So Job ſpeaks, "O that my grief "were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the ba"lances together! For now it would be heavier than the ſand "of the ſea, therefore my words are ſwallowed up," Job vi. 2, 3, 4. *q. d.* If all the ſand that lies upon all the ſhores in the world, were ſhovelled up into one heap, and caſt into one

ale, and my ſorrows into the other, my grief would weigh all up. How heavy are the hearts of the afflicted! what inſupportable ſorrows do they feel, and groan under, eſpecially when God ſmites them in the deareſt and neareſt concerns they have in the world.

2. But eſpecially the reelings and ſtaggerings of the mind, are occaſioned by the inordinate and irregular workings of its own thoughts. Were it but poſſible to keep the mind in a ſerene, ſedate, and ordinate frame, our burdens would be comparatively light to what we now feel them to be; but the falling of the thoughts into confuſions, and great diſtractions, poils all. Upon this account it is, that afflictions are compared to a ſtupifying doſe, which caſts the ſoul into amazement. Pſal. lx. 3. "Thou haſt ſhewed thy people hard things, "thou haſt made us to drink the wine of aſtoniſhment." Afflictions are called the wine of aſtoniſhment, from their effects upon the mind: for under a great and ſudden ſtroke of God, it is like a *watch* wound up above its due height, ſo that for a time it ſtands ſtill, neither grace nor reaſon move at all: and when it begins to move again, O how confuſed and irregular, are its motions! it is full of murmurs, diſputes, and quarrels: theſe aggravate both our ſin and miſery. It is our own thoughts which take the arrow of God ſhot at us, (which did but ſtick before in our clothes, and was never intended to hurt us, but only to warn us), and thruſt it into our very hearts.

For thoughts, as well as *poniards*, can pierce and wound the hearts of men, Luke ii. 35. "A ſword ſhall pierce thro' "thine own ſoul;" (*i. e.*). Thy thoughts ſhall pierce thee. They can ſhake the whole fabric of the body, and looſe the beſt compacted and ſtrongly jointed parts of the body: Dan. v. 6. "His thoughts troubled him, and the joints of his loins "were looſed." And thus a man's own mind becomes a rack of torment to him; a miſery which no creatures, except men and devils, are ſubjected to. O how many bodies have been deſtroyed by the paſſions of the ſoul! they cut through it, as a keen knife through a narrow ſheath. "Worldly ſorrow works "death," 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Propoſition 2. *The merciful God, in condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of his people, hath provided the beſt ſupports and reliefs for their feeble and afflicted ſpirits.*

"In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts "delight my ſoul," Pſal. xciv. 17. Carnal men ſeek their relief under trouble, from carnal things; when one creature

forſakes them, they retreat to another which is yet left them, till they are beaten out of all, and then their hearts fail, having no acquaintance with God, or ſpecial intereſt in him: for the creatures will quickly ſpend all that allowance of comfort they have to ſpend upon us. Some try what relief the rules of *philoſophy* can yield them, ſuppoſing a neat ſentence of Seneca may be as good a remedy as a text of David or Paul; but, alas! it will not do: ſubmiſſion from fatal neceſſity, will never eaſe the afflicted mind, as Chriſtian reſignation will do. It is not the eradicating, but regulating of the affections, that compoſes a burdened and diſtracted ſoul. One word of God will ſignify more to our peace, than all the famed and admired precepts of men.

To neglect God, and ſeek relief from the creature, is to forſake the fountain of living waters, and go to the broken ciſterns which can hold no water, Jer. ii. 13. The beſt creature is but a ciſtern, not a fountain; and our dependance on it makes it a broken ciſtern, ſtrikes a hole through the bottom of it, ſo that it can hold no water. "I, even I, (ſaith "God) am he that comforteth you," Iſa. lvii. 12. The ſame hand that wounds you, muſt heal you, or you can never be healed. Our compaſſionate Saviour, to aſſuage our ſorrows, hath promiſed *he will not leave us comfortleſs*, John xiv. 18. Our God will not contend for ever, leſt the ſpirit fail before him, Iſa. lvii. 16. He knew how ineffectual all other comforts and comforters would be, even phyſicians of no value, and therefore hath graciouſly prepared comforts for his diſtreſſed ones, that will reach their end.

Propoſition 3. *God hath gathered all the materials and principals of our relief into the covenant of grace, and expects that we betake ourſelves unto it, in times of diſtreſs, as to our ſure, ſufficient, and only remedy.*

As all the rivers run into the ſea, and there is the congregation of all the waters; ſo all the promiſes and comforts of the goſpel, are gathered into the covenant of grace, and there is the congregation of all the ſweet ſtreams of refreſhment that are diſperſed throughout the ſcriptures. The covenant is the ſtore-houſe of promiſes, the ſhop of cordials and rare *elixirs*, to revive us in all our faintings; though, alas! moſt men know no more what are their virtues, or where to find them, than an illiterate ruſtic put into an *apothecary's ſhop*.

What was the cordial God prepared to revive the hearts of his poor captives groaning under hard and grievous bondage, both in Egypt and in Babylon? Was it not his covenant with

Abraham? And why did he give it the solemn confirmation by an oath, but that it might yield to him, and all his believing seed, *strong consolation*, Heb. vi. 17, 18. the very spirit of joy amidst all their sorrows.

And what was the relief God gave to the believing *eunuchs* that kept his Sabbaths, took hold of his covenant, and chose the things in which he delighted? "To them (saith he) will I "give in my house, and within my walls, a place, and a name "better than that of sons or of daughters," Isa. lvi. 4, 5. Tho' they were deprived of those comforts other men have in their posterity, yet he would not have them look upon themselves as dry trees; a covenant-interest would answer all, and recompense abundantly the want of children, or any other earthly comfort.

Certainly, therefore, David was at the right door of relief and comfort, when he repairs to the covenant, as here in the text, "Yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant." There, or no where else, the relief of God's afflicted is to be found.

Now, to make any thing become a complete and perfect relief to an afflicted spirit, these three properties must concur and meet in it, else it can never effectually relieve any man.

I. It must be able to remove all the causes and grounds of troubles.

II. It must be able to do so at all times.

III. It must be capable of a good personal security to us.

For if it only divert our troubles, (as creature-comforts use to do), and do not remove the ground and cause of our trouble, it is but an *anodyne*, not a *cure* or *remedy*. And if it can remove the very ground and cause of our trouble, for a time, but not for ever, then it is but a temporary relief: our troubles may return again, and we left in as bad case as we were before. And if it be in itself, able to remove all the causes and grounds of our trouble, and that at all times, but not capable of a personal security to us, or our well established interest in it, all signifies nothing to our relief.

But open your eyes and behold, O ye afflicted saints, all these properties of a complete relief meeting together in the covenant, as it is displayed in the text. Here is a covenant able to remove all the grounds and causes of your trouble; for it is ORDERED *in all things*; or aptly disposed by the wisdom and contrivance of God, to answer every cause and ground of trouble and sorrow in our hearts. It is able to do this at all times; as well in our day, as in David's or Abraham's day: for it is an *everlasting covenant*; its virtue and efficacy is not

decayed by time. And, laſtly, it is capable of a good perſonal ſecurity or aſſurance to all God's afflicted people; for it is a *ſure covenant*. The concurrence of theſe three properties in the covenant makes it a complete relief, and perfect remedy, to which nothing is wanting in the kind and nature of a remedy. Theſe three glorious properties of the covenant are my proper province to open and confirm, for your ſupport and comfort in this day of trouble.

I. *That the covenant of grace is able to remove all the cauſes and grounds of a believer's trouble, be they never ſo great or many.* This I doubt not will be convincingly evidenced and demonſtrated by the following arguments, or undeniable reaſons.

Argument I. Whatſoever diſarms afflictions of the only ſting whereby they wound us, muſt needs be a complete relief and remedy to the afflicted ſoul.

But ſo doth the covenant of grace, it diſarms afflictions of the only ſting by which they wound us.

Therefore the covenant of grace muſt needs be a complete relief and remedy to the afflicted ſoul.

The ſting of all afflictions is the guilt of ſin; when God ſmites, conſcience uſually ſmites too: and this is it that cauſes all that pain and anguiſh in the afflicted. It is plainly ſo in the example of the widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 18. when her ſon, her only ſon, and probably her only child, died, how did that ſtroke of God revive guilt in her conſcience, and made the affliction piercing and intolerable! as appears by her paſſionate expoſtulation with Elijah, who then ſojourned in her houſe: "What have I to do with thee, O man of God? art thou "come unto me to call my ſin to remembrance, and to ſlay my "ſon?" *q. d.* What injury have I done thee? Didſt thou come hither to obſerve my ſins, and pray down this judgment upon my child for them? The death of her ſon revived her guilt, and ſo it generally doth, even in the moſt holy men.

When Job looked upon his waſted body under afflictions, every wrinkle he ſaw upon it, ſeemed to him like a witneſs riſing up to teſtify againſt him. "Thou haſt filled me with "wrinkles, which is a witneſs againſt me; and my leanneſs "riſing up in me, beareth witneſs to my face," Job xvi. 8.

Affliction is like a *hue* and *cry* after ſin in the ears of conſcience, and this is the envenomed poiſonous ſting of affliction: pluck out this, and the afflicted man is preſently eaſed, though the matter of the affliction ſtill abide with him, and lie upon him. He is afflicted ſtill, but not caſt down by affliction; the anguiſh and burden is gone, though the matter of trouble remain.

This is plain both in ſcripture, and in experience. Suitable hereunto is that ſtrange, but ſweet expreſſion, "The inhabitants ſhall not ſay I am ſick, the people that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquities," Iſa. xxxiii. 24. It is not to be imagined theſe people had found ſuch a fortunate *iſland*, or happy *climate*, where no diſeaſe could touch or invade their bodies; no, ſickneſs will find out the bodies of the beſt men, wherever they live; wherever ſin hath been, ſickneſs and death will follow it. Heaven is the only privileged place from theſe miſeries: but the meaning is, though they be ſick, they ſhall not feel the pains and burdens of ſickneſs, "they ſhall not ſay they are ſick:" And why ſo? becauſe *their iniquities are forgiven*; plainly confirming what was before aſſerted, that the anguiſh of an affliction is gone as ſoon as ever the ſting of guilt is pluckt out. And hence, pardoning of the ſoul, and healing of the body, are put together as *conjugate mercies*: "Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diſeaſes," Pſal. ciii. 1, 3. When the ſoul is at eaſe, the pains of the body are next to nothing: Sickneſs can cloud all natural joys, but not the joy of a pardon.

Nay, which is yet more; pluck out but the ſting of ſin, and there is no horror in death, the king of terrors, and worſt of all outward evils. See how the pardoned believer triumphs over it: "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is "thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin," 1 Cor. xv. 55. They are words of defiance, as men uſe to deride and ſcorn a boaſting inſulting enemy, when they ſee him caſt upon his back, and his ſword broken over his head *.

Where are your boaſts and menaces now? O death, thou haſt loſt thy ſting and terror together. Thus the pardoned believer, with an holy gallantry of ſpirit, derides and contemns his diſarmed enemy death. So then it is manifeſt, that whatever plucks out the poiſonous ſting of affliction, muſt needs be an effectual remedy and cure to the afflicted perſon.

But this the covenant of grace doth; it reveals and applies goſpel-remiſſion to them that are within the bleſſed bond of it. "This ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of "Iſrael; I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their "ſin no more," Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. † Behold here a gracious, full,

* Where is now thy threats? See there thy fury laid. *Ovid.*

† מלח *totum respicit*, It reſpects the propitiatory expiation of ſin by

and irrevocable pardon! *I will forgive*, or be propitiously merciful, as that word imports; pointing plainly to Christ our propitiation, our sins are forgiven us for his name's sake. And a pardon as *full* as it is *free*; iniquity and sin, smaller and greater, are here forgiven; for God, in the remission of his people's sins, having respect to the propitiating blood of Christ, he pardons all, as well as some; that blood deserving and purchasing the most full and complete pardons for his people, 1 John i. 7. "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

And this covenant-pardon is as *firm*, as it is *free* and full. So run the expressions in the grant, *I will remember their sin no more*: Or in the apostle's words, Heb. viii. 12. ὐ μη μνησθω ετι, I will not remember them again: That is, not so remember, as to impute them, or condemn my pardoned ones for them: For the pardoned persons come no more into condemnation, Job v. 24. Their sins are cast into the depths of the sea, Mic. vii. 19. Sooner shall the East and the West, the two opposite points of heaven, meet, than the pardoned soul and its sins meet again in condemnation, Psal. ciii. 12.

Now, the case standing thus with all God's covenant-people, all their sins being graciously, fully, and irrevocably forgiven them, how convincingly and sweetly doth this conclusion follow, that the covenant is a complete remedy to all afflicted believers? As nothing can befal us before Christ and pardon be ours, which is sufficient to raise us, so nothing can befal us afterwards, which should deject and sink us. This is the first benefit afflicted believers receive from the covenant, and this alone is enough to heal all our sorrows.

Arg. II. As the covenant of grace disarms all the afflictions of believers of the only sting by which they wound them; so it alters the very nature and property of their afflictions, and turns them from a *curse* into a *blessing* to them: And in so doing, it becomes more than a *remedy*, even a choice benefit and advantage to them.

All afflictions, in their own nature, are a part of the *curse*: they are the consequence and punishments of sin; they work naturally against our good: But when once they are taken into the covenant, their nature and property is altered. As waters in their subterranean passages, meeting some virtuous mineral in their course, are thereby impregnated, and endowed with a rare healing property to the body; so afflictions passing through the covenant, receive from it an healing virtue to our

by Christ, who is therefore called ιλασμος, and ιλαστηριον. 1 John ii. 2. and Rom. iii. 25.

fouls. They are, in themſelves, ſour and harſh, as wild hedge-fruits; but being ingrafted into this ſtock, they yield the pleaſant fruits of righteouſneſs. "If his children break my ſta-"tutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I viſit "their iniquity with the rod, and their ſins with ſtripes: Ne-"verthelefs my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take away, "nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail," Pſal. lxxxix. 30, 31. Here you may ſee all the rods of affliction put into the covenant, as Aaron's rod was into the ark. And hence two things neceſſarily follow.

(1.) That ſuch afflictions can do the children of God no hurt. They may affright, but cannot hurt them: We may meet them with fear, but ſhall part from them with joy: An unſanctified rod never did any man good, and a ſanctified rod never did any man hurt: He may afflict our bodies with ſickneſs, deny, or cut off our comfort in children, impoveriſh our eſtates, let looſe perſecutors upon us; but in all this he really doth us no hurt. as he ſpeaks in Jer. xxv. 6. No more hurt than a skilful *ſurgeon* doth in ſaving his patient's life, by cutting off a mortified gangrened member: No more hurt than froſt and ſnow do the earth in killing the rank weeds that exhauſted the ſap and ſtrength of it, and preparing and mellowing it to produce a fruitful crop of corn. By theſe he recals our minds from vanity, weans our fond and enſnaring affections from the world, diſcovers and mortifies thoſe luſts which gentler methods and eſſays could not do: And is this for our hurt?

I confeſs God's thoughts and ours often differ upon this caſe. We meaſure the good and evil of providences, by their reſpect to the eaſe and pleaſure of our fleſh, but God ſees this is the way to caſt our ſpirits into a dead formality, and in removing them, he doth but deprive us of the occaſions and inſtruments of ſpiritual miſchiefs and miſeries, in which certainly he doth us no hurt.

(2.) But that is not all. Afflictions once put into the covenant, muſt promote the good of the ſaints; they are beneficial, as well as harmleſs things. "We know (ſaith the apo-"ſtle) that all things work together for good to them that love "God." This promiſe is the compaſs which ſets the courſe, and directs the motion of all the afflictions of the people of God; and no ſhip at ſea obeys the rudder ſo exactly, as the troubles of the righteous do the direction of this promiſe. Poſſibly we cannot diſcern this at preſent, but rather prejudge the works of God, and ſay all theſe things are againſt us; but here-

after we shall see, and with joy acknowledge them to be the happy instruments of our salvation.

How often hath affliction sent the people of God to their knees, with such language as this, 'O my God, how vain and 'sensual hath this heart of mine been under prosperity! How 'did the love of the creature, like a sluice cut in the bank of 'a river, draw away the stream of my affections from thee! I 'had gotten a soft pillow of creature-comforts under my head, 'and I easily fell asleep, and dreamed of nothing but rest and 'pleasure, in a state of absence from thee; but now thy rod 'hath awakened me, and reduced me to a right sense of my 'condition. I was negligent or dead-hearted in the course of 'my duty, but now I can pray more fervently, feelingly, and 'frequently, than before. O it was good for me, that I have 'been afflicted. O, saith God, how well was this rod bestow-'ed, which hath done my poor child so much good; now I 'have more of his heart, and more of his time and company 'than ever; now I hear the voice, and see the gracious work-'ings of the spirit of my child after me again, as in the days of 'his first love.' The sum of all this you may see in the ingenuous meltings of Ephraim under a sanctified rod, Jer. xxxi. 19, 20. and the sounding of the bowels of mercy over him. 'Ephraim mourns at God's feet, and God falls upon Ephraim's 'neck. I have been as a beast, saith Ephraim: Thou art a 'dear son, a pleasant child, saith God. My bowels are trou-'bled and pained for sin, saith Ephraim: And my bowels are 'troubled for thee, and my compassions rolled together, saith 'God.' O blessed fruits of sanctified rods! such precious effects as these richly repay you for all the pain and anguish you feel. And thus, as the wound of a scorpion is healed by applying its own oil, so the evil of affliction is cured by the sanctified fruits that it produceth, when it is once put into the covenant.

Arg. III. The covenant doth not only alter the nature and property of the saints afflictions, but it also *orderly disposes*, and aptly places them in the frame of providence, among the other means and instruments of our salvation; so that a council of angels could never place them, or the least circumstance belonging to them, more aptly and advantageously than it hath done. The knowledge of this must needs quiet and fully relieve the afflicted soul: And who can doubt it, that believes it to be a covenant *ordered in all things*, as the text speaks? Here all things, yea, the most minute circumstances that befal you, are reduced to their proper class, and place of service; so ex-

actly ordered, that all the wiſdom of men and angels knows not how to mend or alter any thing to your advantage.

If a ſmall pin be taken out of the frame of a watch, and placed any where elſe, the motion is either preſently ſtopped, or made irregular. And as Galen obſerves of the curious fabric of an human body, that if the greateſt naturaliſts ſhould ſtudy an hundred years to find out a more commodious ſituation, or configuration of any part thereof, it could never be done. It is ſo here: No man can come after God, and ſay, this or that had been better placed or timed than it is, if this affliction had been ſpared, and ſuch an enjoyment ſtood in the room of it, it had been better. All God's providences are the reſult and iſſues of his infinite wiſdom: For "he works all things according to "the counſel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. The *wheels, i. e.* the motions and revolutions of providence are full of eyes, Ezek. i. 18. They are well adviſed, and judicious motions, *Non caeco impetu volvuntur rotae;* they run not at random. The moſt regular and excellent working muſt needs follow the moſt deep and perfect counſel, Iſa. xxviii. 29. "He is deep in coun-"ſel, and excellent in working."

Now, every affliction that befals God's covenanted people, being placed by the moſt wiſe and infinite counſel of God in that very order, time, and manner, in which they befal them, this very affliction, and not that, at this very time, and not at another, (it being always a time of need, 1 Pet. i. 6.), and uſhered in by ſuch forerunning occaſions and circumſtances; it muſt follow, that they all take the proper places, and come exactly at the fitteſt ſeaſons; and if one of them were wanting, ſomething would be defective in the frame of your happineſs. As they now ſtand, they work together for your good, which diſplaced, they would not do.

It is ſaid, Jer. xviii. 11. "Behold, I frame evil, and I deviſe "a deviee." It is ſpoken of the contrivance and frame of afflictions, as the proper works of God. The project of it is laid for his glory, and the eternal good of his people. It turns to their ſalvation, Phil. i. 19. But O how fain would we have this or that affliction ſcrewed out of the frame of providence, conceiving it would be far better out than in! O if God had ſpared my child, or my health, it had been better for me than now it is. But this is no other than a preſumptuous correcting and controuling of the wiſdom of God, and ſo he interprets it, Job xl. 2. "He that reproveth God, let him anſwer "it." God hath put every affliction upon your perſons, eſtates,

relations, juſt where you find and feel it; and that whole frame he hath put into the covenant, in the virtue whereof it works for your ſalvation: and therefore let all diſputings and reaſonings, all murmurs and diſcontents ceaſe; nothing can be better for you, than as God hath laid it; and this, one would think, ſhould heal and quiet all. You yourſelves would mar all, by preſuming to mend any thing. "Who hath directed the Spi-"rit of the Lord, or being his counſellor, hath taught him? "With whom took he counſel, and who inſtructed him, and "taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him know-"ledge, and ſhewed to him the way of underſtanding?" Iſa. xl. 13, 14. Well then, be ſatisfied it is beſt as it is; and nothing can be ſo advantageous to you, as God's projects and contrivance, which you are ſo uneaſy under, and diſſatisfied about.

Arg. IV. As the covenant ſorts and ranks all your troubles into their proper claſſes and places of ſervice, ſo it ſecures the ſpecial gracious preſence of God with you, in the deepeſt plunges of diſtreſs that can befal you; which preſence is a full relief to all your troubles, or elſe nothing in the world is, or can be ſo.

The very heathens thought themſelves well ſecured againſt all evils and dangers, if they had their petty houſhold-gods with them in their journies: but the great God of heaven and earth hath engaged to be with his people, in all their afflictions and diſtreſſes. As a tender father ſits up himſelf with his ſick child, and will not leave him to the care of a ſervant only; ſo God thinks it not enough to leave his children to the tutelage and charge of angels, but will be with them himſelf, and that in a ſpecial and peculiar way: ſo run the expreſs words of the covenant, Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will not turn away from them "to do them good, but I will put my fear into their hearts; "and they ſhall not depart from me." Here he undertakes for both parts, himſelf and them. *I will not*, and *they ſhall not*.

Here is the ſaints ſecurity for the gracious preſence of God with them, a preſence which diſpels all the clouds of affliction and ſorrow, as the ſun ſcatters the morning miſts. The God of all conſolation is with you, O poor dejected believers, and will not ſuch a preſence turn the darkneſs into light round about you? There is a threefold preſence of God with his creatures.

1. Eſſential, which is common and neceſſary to all.
2. Gracious, which is peculiar to ſome on earth.

3. Glorious, which is the felicity of heaven.

The firſt is not the privilege here ſecured; for it is neceſſary to all, good and bad: In him we all live, and move, and have our being. The vileſt *men* on earth, yea, the *beaſts* of the field, and the very *devils* in hell, are always in this preſence of God, but it is their torment, rather than their privilege. The laſt is proper to the glorified ſaints and angels. Such a preſence embodied ſaints cannot now bear; but it is his ſpecial gracious preſence which is made over and ſecured to them in the covenant of grace; and this preſence of God is manifeſted to them two ways:

1. Internally, by the Spirit.
2. Externally, by Providence.

1. Internally, by the Spirit of grace dwelling and acting in them, this is a choice privilege to them in the day of affliction: for hereby they are inſtructed and taught the meaning of the rod, Pſal. xciv. 12. "Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, "and teacheſt him out of thy law." O it is a bleſſed thing to be taught ſo many leſſons by the rod, as the Spirit teacheth them! Surely they reckon it an abundant recompenſe of all that they ſuffer. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, "that I might learn thy ſtatutes," Pſalm cxix. 71. Yea, he refreſhes as well as teaches, and no cordials revive like his. "In "the multitude of the thoughts I had within me, thy com-"forts delight my ſoul," Pſal. xciv. 19.

Yea, by the preſence and bleſſing of his Spirit, our afflictions are ſanctified to ſubdue and purge out our corruptions. "By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all "the fruit to take away ſin," Iſa. xxvii. 9. Now, if a man be inſtructed in the ends and deſigns of the rod, refreſhed and comforted under every ſtripe of the rod, and have his ſins mortified and purged by the ſanctification of the Spirit upon his afflictions; then both the burdenſomeneſs and bitterneſs of his afflictions are removed, and healed by the internal preſence of the Spirit of God with his afflicted ones. But,

2. Beſides this, God is providentially preſent with his people, in all their troubles, in a more external way; ordering all the circumſtances of their troubles to their advantage. He orders the degree and extent of our afflictions, ſtill leaving us ſome mercies and comforts to ſupport and refreſh us, when others are cut off. In meaſure doth he debate with his covenanted people, ſtaying the rough wind in the day of the eaſt-wind, Iſa. xxvii. 8. He might juſtly ſmite all our outward comforts at once, ſo that affliction ſhould not riſe up the ſecond

for what comfort ſoever hath been abuſed by ſin, is thereby forfeited into the hand of judgment. But the Lord knows our inability to ſuſtain ſuch ſtrokes, and therefore proportions them to our ſtrength. We have ſome living relations to miniſter comfort to us when mourning over our dead: He makes not a full end of all at once. Yea, and his providence ſupports our frail bodies, enabling them to endure the ſhocks and ſtorms of ſo many afflictions, without ruin. Surely there is as much of the care of Providence manifeſted in this, as there is in preſerving poor crazy leaking barks, and weather-beaten veſſels at ſea, when the waves not only cover them, but break into them, and they are ready to founder in the midſt of them.

O what a ſingular mercy is the gracious preſence of God with men! even the ſpecial preſence of that God, "who is above "all, and through all, and in you all," as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Eph. iv. 6. *Above all*, in majeſty and dominion; *through all*, in his moſt efficacious providence; and *in you all*, by his grace and Spirit. As he is above all, ſo he is able to command any mercy you want, with a word of his mouth; as he is through all, ſo he muſt be intimately acquainted with all your wants, ſtraits, and fears; and as he is in you all, ſo he is engaged for your ſupport and ſupply, as you are the dear members of Chriſt's myſtical body.

Objection. But methinks I hear Gideon's objection rolled into the way of this ſovereign conſolation: "If God be with us, "why is all this evil befallen us?"

Solution. All what? If it had been all this rebellion and rage againſt God, all this apoſtacy and revolting more and more, all this contumacy and hardneſs of heart under the rod; then it had been a weighty and ſtumbling objection indeed: but to ſay, If God be with us, why are all theſe chaſtening corrections and temporal croſſes befallen us? why doth he ſmite our bodies, children, or eſtates? is an objection no way fit to be urged by any that are acquainted with the ſcriptures, or the nature and tenor of the covenant of grace. Is afflicting and forſaking all one with you? muſt God needs hate, becauſe he ſcourgeth you? I queſtion whether Satan himſelf hath impudence enough to ſet ſuch a note or comment upon Heb. xii. 6. "For whom the "Lord loveth, he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom "he receiveth."

No, no, Chriſtian, it is not a chaſtening rod, but the denying of ſuch a favour, and ſuffering men to ſin with impunity, and go on proſperouſly in the way of their own hearts, that ſpeaks a rejected man, as the next words, ver. 7. inform you.

he never loved you the better for your prosperity, so you may be confident he loves you never the less for your adversity: and will not this close and heal the wounds made by affliction? What, not such a promise as this, *I will be with him in trouble*, Psal. xci. 15. Will not such a presence revive thee? What then can do it? Moses reckoned that a wilderness with God, was better than a Canaan without him. "If thy presence go not "with me, (saith he), then carry us not hence," Exod. xxxiii. 15. And if there be the spirit of a Christian in thee, and God should give thee thine own choice, thou wouldst rather chuse to be in the midst of all these afflictions with thy God, than back again in all thy prosperity, and among thy children and former comforts, without him.

Arg. V. As this covenant assures you of God's gracious and special presence, so it fully secures all the essentials and substantials of your happiness, against all hazards and contingencies; in which security lies your full relief and complete remedy against all your troubles for the loss of other things.

There be two sorts of things belonging to all God's people, *viz.*

1. Essentials.
2. Accidentals.

1. They have some things which are essential to their happiness; such are the loving-kindness of God, the pardon of sin, union with Christ, and eternal salvation. And they have other things which are accidentals, that come and go, live and die, without affecting or altering their happiness; such are health, estates, children, and all sorts of relations and earthly comforts. These are to our happiness, as leaves are to the tree, which fade and fall away without endangering the tree; but the other as the vital sap, without which it withers and dies at the very root. Now, if it can be made out that the covenant fully secures the former; then it will strongly follow, that it therein abundantly relieves us under all our sorrows for the latter: And that it doth so, will evidently appear by reviewing the covenant, wherein you shall find all these substantial and essential mercies of believers, fully secured against all hazards and contingencies whatsoever.

There the loving-kindness of God is secured to their souls, whatever afflictions he lays upon their bodies. "Nevertheless "my loving-kindness will I not take away," Psal. lxxxix. 33. And their pardon is as safe as the favour of God is; it is safely locked up in that promise, "I will remember their sins no "more," Jer. xxxi. 34. Yea, heaven, together with our per-

ſeverance in the way to it, are both put out of hazard by that invaluable promiſe, "They ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any "man pluck them out of my hand," John x. 28.

Thus are all the eſſentials of a believer's happineſs ſecured in the covenant; and theſe being ſafe, the loſs of other enjoyments ſhould not much affect or wound them, becauſe if he enjoy them, they add nothing to his happineſs; and if he loſe them, he is ſtill happy in God without them. And this unriddles that enigmatical expreſſion of the apoſtle, 2 Cor. vi. 10. "As having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things:" (*i. e.*) the ſubſtraction of all external things cannot make us miſerable, who have Chriſt for our portion, and all our happineſs entire in him.

If a man travelling on the road, fall into the hands of thieves, who rob him of a few ſhillings, why this doth not much affect him; for though he have loſt his ſpending money, yet his ſtock is ſafe at home, and his eſtate ſecure, which will yield him more. Or if a man has been at court, and there obtained a pardon for his life, or a grant of a thouſand pounds *per annum*, and returning home ſhould chance to loſe his gloves, or his handkerchief, ſure if the man be in his wits, he will not take on or mourn for the loſs of theſe trifles, whilſt the pardon or grant is ſafe. Surely theſe things are not worth the mentioning.

It is true, the loſs of outward and earthly things are to a believer real trials, yet they are but ſeeming loſſes: and therefore they are expreſſed in the apoſtle's phraſe, with a *tanquam, ſicut*: "As chaſtened, and not killed; as ſorrowful, yet always re"joicing," 2 Cor. vi. 9. And if your loſſes be but as it were loſſes, your ſorrows ſhould be but as it were ſorrows: much like a phyſic-ſickneſs, which we do not call a proper ſickneſs, but as it were a ſickneſs, becauſe it conduceth to the *health*, and not to the *hurt* of the perſon; as all God's medicinal afflictions on his people alſo do.

Indeed, if the ſtroke of God were at our ſouls, to cut them off from Chriſt and heaven, to raze our names out of the covenant, or revoke the pardon of ſin; then we had cauſe enough to juſtify the extremity of ſorrow; cauſe enough to weep out our eyes, and break our hearts for ſuch a diſmal blow as that would be. But bleſſed be God your ſtand out of the way of ſuch ſtrokes as theſe; let God ſtrike round about you, or lay his hand upon any other comforts you poſſeſs he will never ſmite you in theſe eſſential things, which is certainly enough to allay and relieve all your other ſorrows.

My name is blotted out of the earth, but ſtill it is written in heaven. God hath taken my only ſon from me, but he hath given his only Son for me, and to me. He hath broken off my hopes and expectations as to this world, but my hopes of heaven are fixed, ſure, and immoveable for ever. My houſe and heart are both in confuſion and great diſorder, but I have ſtill an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things, and ſure. I cannot ſay my ſon liveth, but I can ſtill ſay, "I know "that my Redeemer liveth. The graſs withereth, and the "flower fadeth; but the word of the Lord abideth for ever," Iſa. xl. 8.

Arg. VI. As God ſtrikes none of the ſubſtantial mercies of his covenant people, ſo when he doth ſmite their external accidental comforts, the covenant of grace aſſures them, that even thoſe ſtrokes are the ſtrokes of love, and not wrath; the wounds of a friend, and not of an enemy; which is another ſingular relief to the afflicted ſoul.

The moſt frightful thing in any affliction, is the mark or character of God's wrath which it ſeems to bear: take away that, and the affliction is nothing. "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine "anger, neither chaſten me in thy hot diſpleaſure," Pſal. vi. 1. He doth not deprecate the rebukes, but the anger of God; not his chaſtening, but his hot diſpleaſure. God's anger is much more terrible than his rebuking, and his hot diſpleaſure than his chaſtening. Therefore he intreats, that whatever God did to him in the way of affliction, he would do nothing in the way of wrath; and then he could bear any thing from him. A mark of divine anger engraven upon any affliction, makes that affliction dreadful to a gracious ſoul.

But if a man be well ſatisfied, that whatever anguiſh there be, yet there is no anger, but that the rod is in the hand of love; O how it eaſes the ſoul, and lightens the burden! Now this deſireable point is abundantly cleared in the covenant; where we find a clear conſiſtence, yea, a neceſſary connection betwixt the love and the rod of God, Pſal. lxxxix. 31. and Heb. xii. 6. Nay, ſo rare are the afflictions of the ſaints from being marks of his wrath, that they are the fruits and evidences of his fatherly love.

Two men walking through the ſtreets, ſee a company of boys fighting, one of them ſteps forth, and ſingles out one of thoſe boys, and carries him home to correct him; which of the two, think you, is that child's father? The caſe ſtanding thus with

all God's people, ſurely there is no reaſon for their deſponden-cies whatever their afflictions be.

Arg. VII. Laſtly, The covenant doth not only diſcover the conſiſtence and connection betwixt the love and the rod of God, but it alſo gives full ſatisfaction to the ſaints, that whatſoever contemporary mercy they are deprived of, which was within the bond of the covenant when they enjoyed it, is not loſt, but ſhall certainly be reſtored to them again with a rich improve-ment, and that they ſhall enjoy it again to all eternity.

What a rare model or platform of conſolatory arguments hath the apoſtle laid down to antidote our immoderate ſorrows for the death of our dear relatives which died intereſted in Chriſt and the covenant! 1 Theſſ. iv. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. "I "would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them "which are aſleep," they are not dead, but aſleep. Sleep is but a parentheſis to the labours and travels of this life; and it is but a partial privation, not of the habit, but acts of reaſon, to which, upon awaking, the ſoul returns again. Juſt ſuch a thing is that which in believers is commonly called death. And we do not uſe to bewail our friends, becauſe they are fallen a-ſleep: and therefore it no way becomes us to ſorrow as thoſe that have no hope, nor to look upon them as loſt; for as he ſtrongly argueth and concludeth (ver. 14.) their reſtoration to their bodies, yea, and to our enjoyment again, is fully ſecured both to them and us by the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead. The influence of his reſurrection is by the prophet Iſaiah com-pared to the morning-dew, Iſa. xxvi. 19. to ſhew that what virtue there is in the morning-dew, to cauſe the languiſhing plants of the earth to revive and flouriſh, that, and much more, there is in the reſurrection of Chriſt, to revive and quicken the dead bodies of theſe ſaints; their bodies ſhall be reſtored by virtue of the warm animating dew or influence of his reſur-rection.

Objection. But the marvellous change which the reſurrection makes upon glorified bodies, and the long ſeparation of many ages betwixt us and them, ſeems to make it impoſſible for us to know them, as thoſe that were once related to us upon earth; and, if ſo, then that comfort which reſulted from them, as in relation to us, is periſhed with them at death.

Solution. Whatever change the reſurrection ſhall make on their bodies, and the length of time betwixt our parting with them on earth, and meeting them again in heaven ſhall be; neither the one or other ſeem ſufficient to deſtroy the grounds of our hope, that we ſhall know them to be the very perſons

that were once ſo dear to us upon earth. There may remain ſome lineament or property of inviduation, whereby the acute glorified eye may poſſibly diſcover who they were; or if not, yet none can doubt but it may be diſcovered to us by revelation from God; and that one way or other it will be diſcovered, is highly probable, becauſe nothing will be denied to that perfect ſtate which may contribute to, or complete the joy and happineſs thereof, as we cannot but think this knowledge will do. If Adam knew Eve to be fleſh of his fleſh, and bone of his bone, in the ſtate of innocence; and if the apoſtles knew Moſes and Elias upon the mount, yea, if Dives in hell knew Abraham and Lazarus in heaven; ſure we may well allow that knowledge to the glorified ſaints in heaven, which we find in the ſtate of innocence, or in the ſinful ſtate on earth, or in the ſtate of the damned in hell.

And if ſo, then the covenanted parents ſhall be able to ſay in that day, this was our child for whom we prayed and travelled again, till Chriſt was formed in him; this is he whom we educated for God, and trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and now we ſee the fruit of our prayers, counſels, catechiſings; a child of ſo many prayers periſhed not. And the covenanted child ſhall ſay, this was my pious Father, who took ſuch care for my ſoul; and this my tender mother, who, like another Monica, was zealouſly concerned for my eternal happineſs. Theſe are they that ſowed ſo many prayers, which God gave them not time to reap the fruits of on earth, but now they ſhall reap the fruit and comfort of them for ever. O joyful meeting in the kingdom of God! The joy of ſuch a meeting abundantly recompenſes for all the tears and groans of a dolorous parting.

Now, put all this together, and value the arguments produced to make good the firſt thing propounded, namely, the ſufficiency of the covenant to relieve and remedy all the ſorrows and loſſes of believers, be they never ſo many, or ſo great; this cannot be doubted, ſince it hath been proved, that it *diſarms* all their afflictions of the only ſting by which they wound; *alters* the very nature and property of their afflictions, turning them from curſes into bleſſings; *ranks* and *diſpoſes* them into their proper claſs and place of ſervice, ſo as the counſel of men and angels could never lay them better to our advantage; *engages* the gracious and ſpecial preſence of God with you in all your troubles; *ſecures* all your eſſential and ſubſtantial mercies from all hazards and contingencies; diſcovers a conſiſtency, yea,

a connection betwixt the rod and the love of God; and *assures* you, that whatever temporal mercy you ever enjoyed, in and by virtue of the covenant, shall be restored to you again with an admirable improvement, and singular advantage. It is by all this, I say, abundantly proved, that the covenant is a sovereign and effectual remedy to all the sorrows of God's people; and that it was no *hyperbole* in David's *encomium*, when he called it *his salvation, and all his desire*. But then, as I hinted before,

II. It must be able to do these things at all times, and in all ages, or else it will be but a temporary relief to some only, and not to all. Now, that the covenant hath this ability in all ages, and is as able to relieve us now, as it was to relieve David in his day, fully appears by the epithet given it in the text, it is an EVERLASTING COVENANT. "Yet hath "he made with me an everlasting covenant."

Time is the measure of other things; but everlastingness is the measure of the covenant. When the Lord espouseth a people to himself in covenant, "he betrothes them to himself for "ever," Hos. ii. 19. And from that day forward they may say on good grounds, "This God is our God for ever and ever; "he will be our guide even unto death," as it is in Psal. xlviii. 14. Nothing in nature is so firmly established as the covenant is. Hills and mountains shall sooner start from their basis and centre, and fly like wandering atoms up and down in the air, than this covenant shall start from its sure and stedfast foundation, Isa. liv. 10.

The causes and reasons of the immutability of the new covenant, are,

1. The unchangeable purpose of God, which is a sure and stedfast foundation, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "Nevertheless, the founda- "tion of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth "them that are his." The first act of God's love to the creature, is that by which he chuseth such a one to be his, and is therefore called the foundation of God, as being that on which he lays the superstructure of all other mercies. And this stands sure, there can be vacillancy or slipperiness in such a foundation; for he knows who are his; he knows them as his creatures, and as his new-creatures in covenant with him; as his by election, and his by covenant-transaction and compact. The purpose of his grace before time, gave being to the covenant of grace in time, and is the foundation of it.

2. The free grace of God in Christ, is that which gives immutability to this covenant. It is not built upon works, but

grace: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to "the end the promise might be sure to all the seed," Rom. iv. 16. This covenant is not founded as the first was, upon the variable and inconstant obedience of man, but upon grace, which is a steddy and firm foundation of it.

3. The suretiship of Christ gives everlasting stability to this covenant, Heb. vii. 22. "He was made * the surety of a better testament," or covenant: For διαθηκη signifies both; he struck hands, or engaged himself for the whole covenant, and every condition in it, and that both on God's part and ours; to undergo all our punishments, to pay all our debts, and to work in us all that God required of us in the covenant of grace: And all this under the penalty that lay upon us to have undergone. And this not as other sureties, who enter into one and the same bond with the principal, so that the creditor may come upon which he will: but he lays all upon Christ, and relies wholly upon him for satisfaction, knowing he was able to perform it; and so under the type of God's covenant with David, Christ is brought in, Psal. lxxxix. 19. "Thou spakest in vision "to thy holy One, and saidst, I have laid help on one who is "mighty:" *q. d.* I know thy ability, my Son, thou art able to pay me, and therefore I lay all upon thee.

It follows strongly from what hath been said, that the virtue of the covenant decays not by time, as other things do, but it is at this day, and will be to the end of the world, as potent and efficacious a relief to all God's people, as ever it was to David, or any of the believers of the first ages.

And if so, certainly nothing can be more strongly supporting, or sweetly relieving in such a changeable world than this, he hath made with me an everlasting covenant. What David speaks of the natural heavens, will be found true, of things overspread and covered by them, Psal. cii. 26, 27. "They shall "perish, but thou shalt endure: and all of them shall wax old "like a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou change them, "and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy "years shall have no end." The creature was, and is not; but my covenant God is the same; his name is *I am*, and his covenant is the same that ever it was; which is the second property or ingredient of this complete remedy to the saints afflictions. The covenant hath not only all power, virtue, and efficacy in itself to relieve a distressed Christian, but it hath it in

* Εγτυος, from εγτυαω which signifies to strike hands, εν γυιοις.

all ages, as well for one as for another. The third and laſt follows, namely,

III. That it is a *ſure covenant:* So David ſtiles it in my text. The certainty of the covenant is the glory of the covenant, and the comfort of all that are in it. The certainty of it in itſelf is paſt all doubt, by what hath been ſaid before. It is certain God did make ſuch an everlaſting covenant with his people in Chriſt, and it muſt remain an eternal truth, that ſuch a covenant there is betwixt God and them. It is as impoſſible that this everlaſting covenant ſhould not be made with them, as it is impoſſible for God to lie, Heb. vi. 18. If he might make himſelf not to have covenanted everlaſtingly with them when once he had ſo covenanted, ſuch a ſuppoſition would deſtroy the foundation of all faith and certainty, and overthrow the apoſtle's conſequence on which the faith and comfort of believers is built. Nor is it any infringement of the Almighty power, to ſay, God himſelf cannot do that which implies a plain contradiction, as *factum infectum reddere*, to make that which was done, not to be done.

But of this there is no doubt; it is a ſure covenant in itſelf. That which makes to my purpoſe here, is to prove it capable of perſonal ſecurity and certainty to us. David had, and all the federates, as well as he, may have a ſubjective or perſonal certainty alſo. He ſpeaks categorically and poſitively in the text, "Yet hath he made [with me] an everlaſting covenant."

Objection. If it be ſaid, he might have a perſonal certainty of it, becauſe it was revealed to him in an extraordinary way by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13, 14. and *extraordinaria non currunt in exemplum*, this was a peculiar favour, which we may not expect.

Solution. I reply, and why may not we know it with as full a certainty to whom God is pleaſed to make it known in his ordinary way? Think you his word and Spirit cannot ratify it as fully and firmly to our ſouls, as Nathan's diſcovery of it did to David's ſoul? God give me but ſuch a ſeal of it in his ordinary method and way of confirmation, and I will deſire no more of him in this world for my relief and comfort, whatever afflictions it ſhall pleaſe him to lay upon me.

And thus you ſee all the properties of a complete remedy in the covenant, and of it every believer may ſay, "This is all "my ſalvation, and all my deſire, though he make not my houſe "to grow." And now what hinders, but that all God's afflicted ſhould ſay from henceforth, "Return unto thy reſt, O my "ſoul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," Pſal.

xvi. 7. I have all the desires of my heart in the covenant of God, though he take away the desire of mine eyes upon earth with his stroke. In this covenant my soul is at rest, and my very heart is centred. No affliction can be great enough to make the consolations of the Almighty seem small in mine eyes. Worldly sorrows may swallow up worldly comforts, but no sorrows upon earth can swallow up the consolations of the covenant.

I know many Christians droop and are dejected under the rod, notwithstanding such sovereign cordials are prepared for them in the covenant; but this is not for want of efficacy in the covenant, but for want of faith to clear their interest, and draw forth the virtue of it to their relief. Some are ignorant of their privileges, and others diffident about their interest. It is with many of God's children, as it is with our children in their infancy, they know not their father, nor the inheritance they are born unto.

That which remains, is the improvement of this truth to our actual comfort and relief in the day of trouble. And this I shall assist you in, as God shall assist me, by way of,

1. Information.
2. Exhortation.
3. Examination, and
4. Consolation.

USE 1. *For information, in three corollaries.*

Corollary 1. By what hath been discoursed from this text, it appears, *That God governs the spiritual part of the world by faith, and not by sense. He will have them live upon his covenant and promises, and fetch their relief and comfort thence, under all their sorrows and distresses in this life.*

God never intended temporal things for his people's portion, therefore from them they must not expect their relief in times of trouble. He will have us read his love to us by things within us, not by things without us. He hath other ways of expressing his love to his people, than by the smiles of his providence upon them. How would earthly things be overvalued and idolized, if besides their conveniency to our bodies, they should be the marks and evidences of God's love to our souls! A Christian is to value himself as the merchant, or the husbandman doth. The merchant values himself by his bills and goods abroad, not by the ready cash that lies by him. And the husbandman by his deeds and leases, and so many acres of corn he hath in the ground, and knows he hath a good estate, though sometimes he be not able to command twenty shillings. Chri-

stian, thy estate also lies in good promises, and new-covenant securities, whether thou hast more or less of earthly comforts in thy hands.

Every creature feeds according to its nature; the same plant affords food to several sorts of creatures: The bee feeds upon the flower, the sheep upon the branch, the bird upon the seed, and the swine upon the root. One cannot live upon what the other doth. So it is here: A Christian can feed upon the promises, and make a sweet meal upon the covenant, which the carnal mind cannot relish. "The life that I now live, I live "by the faith of the Son of God;" saith the apostle, Gal. ii. 21.

This is that mysterious and excellent life of faith, and the test of true Christianity, to relieve ourselves by our hopes of things to come, against present evils; to balance the sorrows and losses of this life, with the promises and expectations of the next. Thus did the renowned believers of the first age; whenever they felt a pang or qualm upon their hearts, under their trials and sorrows from the world, they would presently run to their cordial, the promises, and, by faith, from thence would refresh and invigorate their souls with new life and power. "We faint not, whilst we look not at the things which are "seen, for they are temporal; but at the things which are not "seen, for they are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18. And truly so must we also, when our hearts are faint within us in days of affliction, or our spirits will fail, and we shall go away in a faint fit of despondency.

Corol. 2. *Learn hence the sovereign efficacy of the word, and what a choice privilege it is to have these lively oracles of God in our hands, in a day of distress and trouble.*

It is no ordinary mercy to be born in a land of Bibles and ministers; to have these choice supports and reliefs at hand, in all our fainting hours. "This is my comfort in my affliction, for "thy word hath quickened me," Psal. cxix. 50. It was no small mercy gained by the reformation, that it put the oracles of God into our hands. It affords us many cordials for the support of our souls. For this, among other great and excellent ends, the scriptures were written, "That we, through patience, "and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope," Rom xv. 4. In other parts of the world, it is a sealed book; bless God it is not so to you. All creature-comforts have a double defect, they are neither suitable nor durable; but the word is so. Compare the arguments that have been urged from the covenant, with such as these. It is in vain to trouble ourselves about

what we cannot help: We are not alone in trouble, others have their losses and afflictions as well as we. Alas! what dry and ineffectual comforts are these! they penetrate not the heart, as pardon of sin, peace with God, and sanctification of troubles to our salvation do.

And no less is the mercy of an able New-testament ministry, to open, apply, and inculcate the consolations of the scriptures, to be esteemed. It is no common favour to the afflicted soul, to have with or near him an "Interpreter, one among a thou-"sand, to shew unto him his uprightness," Job xxxiii. 23. O England, prize and improve these mercies, and provoke not thy God to bereave thee of them.

I can find no such settlement made of the gospel and ministry upon any place or people, but that God may remove both upon their abuse of them; and if he do, sad will the case of such a people be, especially when a day of distress and trouble shall be upon them. It is sad to be in a storm at sea, without a compass or pilot to direct and advise the distressed passengers. Much so is the case of the afflicted, when deprived of the word and ministry.

Let it therefore be your care to hide the word in your hearts, and get the teachings of the Spirit; that whatever changes of providence be upon the world, you may have the light and comfort of the scriptures to direct and cheer your souls. Sanctification is the writing of God's law in your hearts; and what is written there is secure and safe. The word within you is more secure, sweet, and effectual, than the word without you. Jerom saith of Nepotianus, that by long and assiduous meditation of the scriptures, his breast was at last become the library of Christ. O that the breast of every Christian were so too.

Corol. 3. *How sad and deplorably miserable is their condition, who have no title to, nor comfort from the covenant of God, when a day of affliction and great distress is upon them!*

Unrelieved miseries are the most intolerable miseries. To be over-weighed with troubles on earth, and want support and comfort from heaven, is a dismal state indeed; yet this is the case of multitudes in the world. If a believer be in trouble, his God bears his burden for him, yea, he bears up him and his burden too; but he that hath no covenant-interest in God, must say as it is, Jer. x. 19. "This is my affliction, and I alone "must bear it."

There are but two ways they can take for relief, either to divert their troubles by that which will inflame them, or rest

their burdened ſpirits upon that which will fail them. To run to the tavern or ale-houſe, inſtead of the cloſet, is to quench the fire by pouring on oil; and to run from one creature which is ſmitten and withered, to another which ſtill continues with us, is to lean upon a broken reed, which not only deceives us, but wounds and pierceth us What a miſerable plight was Saul in, and how doleful was his cry and complaint to Samuel, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. "I am ſore diſtreſſed, for the Philiſtines "make war againſt me, and God is departed from me, and an- "ſwereth me no more." Heaven and earth forſook him at

Reader, if this be thy caſe, I adviſe thee to reſt no longer in ſo miſerable a condition. Thy very diſtreſs ſeems by an happy neceſſity to put thee upon God, and drive thee to him for refuge; and it ſeems to be the very aim and deſign of *God in* blaſting all thy earthly comforts, to neceſſitate thee to come to him, which thou wouldſt never be perſuaded to do, whilſt thou hadſt any creature-prop to ſtay and reſt upon. And think not that thou ſhalt be rejected, becauſe thou art brought by a plain neceſſity to him; come ſincerely, and thou ſhalt not be upbraided, becauſe a neceſſity threw thee upon him.

USE II. Seeing then that the covenant of God is the great relief and ſupport of all his afflicted people, let the afflicted look go to this bleſſed covenant; ſtudy and apply it in all diſtreſſes. It is in itſelf a ſovereign cordial, able to revive a gracious ſpirit at the loweſt ebb; but then it muſt be ſtudied and applied, or it will never give forth its conſolations to our refreſhment. Extreme ſorrows are apt to deafen our ears to all voices of comfort. The loud cries of affliction too often drown the ſweet ſtill voice of ſpiritual conſolation; but either here or no where our redreſs is to be found. Why ſeek we the living among the dead? Comfort from things that cannot yield it? The covenant can diſcover two things which are able to pacify the *moſt diſcom*poſed heart, *viz.*

1. The good } of affliction.
2. The end }

1. It will diſcover to us the good of affliction, and ſo rectify our miſtaken judgments about it. God is not undoing, but conſulting our intereſt and happineſs in all theſe diſpenſations. It will ſatisfy us, that in all theſe things he doth no more than what we ourſelves allow and approve in other caſes. It is not merely from his pleaſure, but for our profit, *that theſe* breaches are made upon our families and comforts, Heb. xii. 10. Who blames the mariner for caſting the goods over-board to ſave ſhip and life in a ſtorm? or the ſurgeon for lancing, yea,

in cutting off a leg or arm to preſerve the life of his patient? in ſoldiers for burning or beating down the ſuburbs, to ſave the city in a ſiege? And why muſt God only be cenſured, for cutting off thoſe things from us which he knows will hazard us in the day of temptation? He ſees the leſs we have of entanglement, the more promptneſs and fitneſs we ſhall have to go through the trials that are coming upon us; and that all the comforts he cuts off from our bodies, are for the profit and advantage of our ſouls.

2. Here you gain a ſight not only of the good of affliction, but alſo of the comfortable end and iſſue of affliction. This cloudy and ſtormy morning will wind up in a ſerene and pleaſant evening. There is a vaſt difference betwixt our meeting with afflictions, and our parting from them. "You have heard of "the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord." O get but Job's ſpirit under affliction, and you may ſee as happy an end of them as he did.

Had Naomi ſeen the end of the Lord in taking away her huſband, and ſtarving her out of Moab, ſhe would not have changed her name, or ſaid the Lord had dealt bitterly with her, in grafting her daughter by that providence into the noble line, out of which the Saviour of the world was to riſe; and could you but ſee that good in order to which all this train of troubles is laid, you would not murmur or deſpond as you do.

Objection 1. O but this is a grievous ſtroke; God hath ſmitten me in the apple of mine eye, and written bitter things againſt me. No ſorrow is like my ſorrow; it is a mourning for an only ſon; I have loſt all in one.

Solution 1. You can never loſe all in one, except that one be Chriſt; and he being your's in covenant, can never be loſt. But your meaning is, you have loſt all of that kind in one, no more ſons to build up your houſe, and continue your name.

2. But yet religion will not allow you to ſay that your dead children are a loſt generation. *Praemittuntur, non amittuntur:* They are ſent before, but not loſt. For they are a covenant-ſeed, by you dedicated to the Lord: They were children of many prayers; a great ſtock of prayers was laid up for them; in them alſo you, and all that knew them, diſcerned a teachable ſpirit, pious inclinations, and conſcience of ſecret duties, ſome good things towards the Lord God of Iſrael, as was ſaid of young Abijah, 1 Kings xiv. 13. So that you parted from them upon far eaſier terms than good David parted from his Amnon, Abſalom, or Adonijah, who died in their ſins and open rebel-

lions. There was a ſting in his troubles which you feel not; and if he comforted himſelf, notwithſtanding, in the covenant of his God, in this reſpect you may much more.

Object. 2. O but my ſon was cut off in the very bud, juſt when the fruits of education were ready to diſcloſe and open.

Sol. Let not that conſideration ſo incenſe your ſorrows; God knows the fitteſt time both to give and to take our comforts; and ſeeing you have good grounds to hope your child died intereſted in the covenant of God, you have the leſs reaſon to inſiſt upon that afflicting circumſtance of an immature death. He that dies in Chriſt, hath lived long enough both for himſelf and us. That *mariner* hath ſailed long enough that hath gained his port; and that ſoldier fought long enough that hath won the victory; and that child lived long enough, that hath won heaven, how early ſoever he died.

Beſide, the ſooner he died, the leſs ſin he hath committed, and the leſs miſery he ſaw and felt in this wretched world, which we are left to behold and feel. And it is but a vanity to imagine that the parting pull with him would have been eaſier, if the enjoyment of him had been longer: For the long enjoyment of deſireable comforts doth not uſe to weaken, but abundantly to ſtrengthen and faſten the ties of affection.

Submit your reaſon therefore, as is meet, to the wiſdom of God, who certainly choſe the fitteſt ſeaſon for this affliction.

O but,———No more buts and objections, I beſeech you. Enough hath been offered from the covenant of your God, to ſilence all your objections, and to give you the eaſe and pleaſure of a reſigned will. And what are all our buts and objections, but a ſpurning at divine ſovereignty, and the thruſting in the affliction deeper into your own hearts, which are wounded but too deep already?

I perſuade you not to put off, but to regulate natural affections: To be without them, would deſervedly rank us among the worſt of heathens; but rightly to bound and manage them, would ſet you among the beſt of Chriſtians.

I cannot imagine what eaſe or advantage holy * Baſil gained by ſuch a particular and heart-piercing account, as he gave of a like affliction with this; nor to what purpoſe it can be to you, to recal and recount thoſe things which only incenſe and aggravate your troubles: Doubtleſs, your better way were to turn your thoughts from ſuch ſubjects as theſe; to your God in ce-

* I once had a ſon (ſaid he), who was a young man, my only ſucceſſor, the ſolace of my age, the glory of his kind, the prop of my family, arrived to the endearing age, &c.

covenant, as David in the text did, and to recount the many great and inestimable mercies that are secured to you therein; which death shall never smite, or cut off from you, as it doth your other enjoyments.

Quest. But yet unless we can in some measure clear our covenant-interest, all these excellent cordials prepared, will signify no more to our relief, than water spilt upon the ground: Help us therefore to do that, or else all that hath been said is in vain? How may a person discern his covenant-right and interest?

Answ. This indeed is worthy of all consideration, and deserves a serious answer, forasmuch as it is fundamental to your comfort, and all actual refreshment in times of trouble; and will bring us to the next use, which is for trial of our covenant interest.

USE III. The great question to be decided, is, whether God be our covenant-God, and we his people? A question of the most solemn nature, and such as requires awful attention.

We cannot expect satisfaction in this matter by such an extraordinary way as David had it, but we may know it by,

First, Our covenant-engagements.

Secondly, Our covenant-impressions,

Thirdly, Our covenant-conversations.

First, By our covenant-engagements, or dedications of ourselves to God; sometimes called our *joining ourselves to the Lord*, Zech. ii. 11. our yielding ourselves to him, Rom. vi. 19. our giving ourselves to him, 2 Cor. viii. 5. The soul that freely and deliberately consents to take or chuse the Lord to be his God, may warrantably conclude the Lord hath taken or chosen him: for our choice of God is but the result of his choice of us, John xv. 16. "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen "you;" *(i. e.)* you could never have chosen me, but in consequence to, and by virtue of my first choice of you.

Well then, let it be seriously considered, whether you have duly consented to take the Lord for your God, and Christ for your Redeemer. This includes two things in it.

1. Your relinquishing of all things inconsistent with him.

2. Your acceptation of all that promotes the glory and enjoyment of him.

1. Your relinquishing of all things that are inconsistent with an interest in him. Except we let these go, God cannot be our God, nor Christ our Redeemer. The things to be relinquished for Christ are, in short, both our *sinful*, and our *righteous self*. Sinful-self must be disclaimed and renounced: For we cannot be the servants of sin, and the servants of Christ too,

Rom. vi. 14, 18. And righteous-ſelf muſt be renounced alſo, or we can have no part or intereſt in his righteouſneſs, Rom. x. 3. Theſe are two difficult points of ſelf-denial, to part with every beloved luſt, and to give up our own righteouſneſs. Thouſands chuſe rather to be damned for ever, than to do either of theſe.

2. Your acceptance and embracing of all things that promote his glory, and further the enjoyment of him. As all the painful ways of duty, hearing, praying, meditating, and all this with the intention of the inner-man, and offering up of the ſoul to God in theſe duties; and the more painful ways of ſuffering for God, and enduring all loſſes, reproaches, torments, and death for him, if his glory requires it, and you may be thereunto called. All this is included in your chuſing God to be your God. And upon our underſtanding and free conſent, and ſealing to theſe articles, we have right to call him our God. Matth. xxi. 24. "If any man will come after me, let him de-"ny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me." Now, have you conſidered the terms of the covenant, weighed and balanced all the conveniencies and inconveniencies of godlineſs, and then determined for Chriſt and holineſs, let the coſt be what it will; then you have choſen him aright for your God. Many think they have choſen God for their God, that never underſtood or deliberated theſe terms. But *non conſentit, qui non ſentit:* He that neither knows nor ponders them, is not capable of giving a due conſent.

Secondly, We may diſcern our covenant-intereſt, in the covenant-impreſſions that are made upon our ſouls. All God's covenant-people have a double mark or impreſſion made upon them, *viz.*

1. Upon their minds.
2. Upon their hearts.

1. Upon their minds, in a more ſpiritual and efficacious knowledge of God, Jer. xxxi. 33. "They ſhall all know me, "from the greateſt of them, even to the leaſt of them." This knowledge is ſaid to be given, not acquired by mere ſtrength of natural abilities and human aids; and *given as in the face of Chriſt*, not by the footſteps of the creatures only, as he ſpeaks, 2 Cor. iv. 6. It is the choice teaching of the anointing, 1 John ii. 27. A knowledge ſpringing from inward experience and ſpiritual ſenſe; as we know the ſweetneſs of honey by taſting, better than by all the deſcriptions and reports that can be made of it.

2. Upon their hearts, in that gracious tenderneſs and melt-

ings of it for ſin, or the diſcoveries of free-grace in the pardon of it. So you read in Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "A new heart alſo "will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you, and "I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will "give you an heart of fleſh."

It is as eaſy to melt the obdurate rocks into ſweet ſyrup, as it is to melt the natural heart into a penitential and tender melting for ſin; but now there is a principle or habit of tenderneſs implanted in the ſoul, whereby it is diſpoſed and inclined to relent and thaw ingenuouſly upon any juſt occaſion.

Thirdly, Our covenant-intereſt may be evinced in and by our covenant-converſations. All the knowledge which is communicated to our minds, and all the tenderneſs given to our hearts, do reſpect and tend to this: Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "I will "put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſta-"tutes." Habits and principles are for action and practice: Grace in the heart is for obedience and holineſs of life.

It is true, that as our graces are imperfect, ſo is our obedience alſo. Perfect working is not to be expected from imperfect creatures. God's own covenanted people do often grieve him, and provoke him to bring them under the rod of affliction; but thoſe their infirmities break not the bond of the covenant, Pſal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32. Care and watchfulneſs ordinarily go before them, conflicts and reſiſtance accompany them, and ſhame, grief, and renewed care, uſually follow them, 2 Cor. vii. 11. By theſe things (which deſerves a more copious diſcourſe than my preſent deſign can allow) we may be helped to clear our intereſt in the covenant of grace: And that being done, it ſhould be out of the power of all the afflictions in the world to ſink your ſpirits. Let me therefore in the laſt place add,

USE IV. A word of conſolation to your dejected and drooping hearts, upon this ſad and mournful occaſion. Why are you ſo troubled? And why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? Methinks there hath been ſo much of ſupport and comfort already diſcovered to you in this bleſſed covenant, that could your faith but once fix upon it, and realize and apply it, I might lay down my pen at this period, and ſay, The work is done, there needs no more; but knowing how obſtinate deep ſorrows are, and how difficult a task the comforting of an afflicted mind is, I will, for a cloſe, ſuperadd a few conſiderations more, to all that hath been urged and argued before.

Conſideration 1. Conſider how ſmall and trivial the comforts, whoſe loſs you bewail, are in compariſon with Jeſus Chriſt, who is ſtill your own, under the bond of a ſure covenant. A

ſon, an only and a promiſing ſon, is a great thing, when he ſtands in compariſon with other creature-comforts, but ſurely he will ſeem a ſmall thing, and next to nothing, when ſet by, or compared with Jeſus Chriſt. Behold the Father, Son, and Spirit! Pardon and eternal ſalvation are this day preſented in the covenant of grace before your ſouls, as your own. "God, "even our own God, ſhall bleſs us," Pſal. lxvii. 6. When you feel your hearts wounded with ſuch a thought as this, I cannot embrace my children in my arms, they are now out of my reach; then bleſs and admire God, that the arms of your faith can embrace ſo great, ſo glorious a Saviour, and that you can ſay, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

Conſid. II. Conſider what evil days are coming on, and what a mercy it is to your dead, that God hath taken them away from the evil to come, Iſa. lvii. 1, 2. There are two ſorts of evils to come, *viz.* Evils of *ſin*, and evils of *ſufferings*; and it is no ſmall favour to be ſet out of the way of both. The grave is the hiding-place where God ſecures ſome from the dangers of both.

We are apt to promiſe ourſelves times of tranquillity, and then it cuts us to think that our dear ones ſhall not partake with us in that felicity: But if we wiſely conſider the ſins or the ſighs of the times, we have more cauſe to rejoice that God hath ſet them out of harm's way.

All things ſeem to conſpire and work towards a day of great temptation and tribulation. Now as Chriſt told his diſciples, who were ſo dejected, becauſe he was to leave them, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go "to the Father:" So truly you would much better expreſs and manifeſt your love to your children, in your ſatisfaction in the will and appointment of God, in taking them into reſt and ſafety, than in your dejections and ſorrows for their removal Surely they are better where they are, than where they were, whom God hath houſed in heaven out of the ſtorm and tempeſt. And could your dead friends that are with Chriſt, have any more intercourſe with this world, and ſee your tears, and hear your ſighs for them, they would ſay to you, as Chriſt did to thoſe that followed him wailing and mourning, Weep not for us, but for yourſelves, and ſuch as remain in the world with you, to ſee and feel the calamities that are coming on it.

Conſid. III. Conſider how near you are to that bleſſed ſtate yourſelves, where *God ſhall be all in all*, and you ſhall feel no want of any creature-comfort, 1 Cor. xv. 28.

Creature-comforts are only accommodated comforts to this animal life we now live, but ſhortly there will be no need of

hem; for *God will be all in all*; That is, all the ſaints ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied in and with God alone. As there is water enough in one ſea to fill all the rivers, lakes, and ſprings in the world: And light enough in one ſun to enlighten all the inhabitants of the world: So there is enough in one God eternally to fill and ſatisfy all the bleſſed ſouls in heaven, without the addition of any creature-comfort. God is complete ſatisfaction to all the ſaints in the abſence (I cannot ſay want) of wives and children, meats and drinks, eſtates and ſenſitive pleaſures: There will be no more need of theſe things, than of candles at noon-day. You ſhall be as the angels of God, who have no concernment for relations.

Your fulneſs of years, infirmities of body, and, I hope, I may add, your improvements in grace, ſpeak you not far ſhort of this bleſſed ſtate: And though you may ſeem to need theſe comforts in the way, your God ſhall ſupply all your wants.

Conſid. IV. To conclude, Whatſoever your troubles, wants, fears, or dangers are, or may be in your paſſage to this bleſſed ſtate, the covenant of grace is your ſecurity, and by virtue thereof your troubles ſhall open and divide, as Jordan did, to give you a ſafe paſſage into your eternal reſt.

Look, as when the Iſraelites came near the land of promiſe, there was a ſwelling Jordan betwixt it and them, which ſeemed to forbid their farther paſſage and progreſs; but it is ſaid, Joſh. iii. 17. "The prieſts that bore the ark of the covenant of the "Lord, ſtood firm on the ground in the midſt of Jordan; and "all the Iſraelites paſſed over on dry ground, until all the peo-"ple were paſſed clean over Jordan." Juſt ſo it is here: The covenant of grace ſtands on firm ground, in the midſt of all the deep waters of tribulation you are to paſs through, to ſecure unto you a ſafe paſſage through them all. Rejoice, therefore, and triumph in the fulneſs and firmneſs of this bleſſed covenant, and whatſoever affliction your God ſhall pleaſe to lay upon you, or whatſoever comfort he ſhall pleaſe to remove from you, ſtill comfort and encourage yourſelves, as David here doth, "Yet "hath he made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all "things, and ſure: For this is all my ſalvation, and all my de-"ſire; although he make it not to grow."

A

SERMON

Preached for the FUNERAL of that Excellent and Religious GENTLEMAN,

JOHN UPTON of LUPTON, Eſq;

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2 CHRON. XXXV. 24, 25.

His ſervants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the ſecond chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jeruſalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the ſepulchres of his fathers: and all Judah and Jeruſalem mourned for Joſiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Joſiah, and all the ſinging-men, and the ſinging-women ſpake of Joſiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Iſrael: and behold they are written in the lamentations.

IN this context we have the hiſtory of the *pious life*, and *tragical death*, of good king Joſiah. The hiſtory of his life gives us an account of both what he *was*, and what he *did*. As to his perſonal endowments and qualifications, they were ſingular and eximious, as appears by the fourfold character by which he is deſcribed in the context: For,

Firſt, He eſpouſed the intereſt of religion betimes, even in his youth; chap. xxxiv. ver. 3. "For in the eighth year of his "reign, while he was yet young, he began to ſeek after the "God of David his father:" And that under the great diſadvantage of an ill education, ſuch a morning promiſed a glorious day.

Secondly, He hated all corrupt mixtures in the worſhip of God, and was anſwerably zealous for reformation; "And in "the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jeruſalem from "the high places, and the groves," *&c.* as knowing well he and his people might expect no more of God's bleſſing on the ordinances, than there was of his preſence in them; and no more of his preſence can rationally be expected, than there is of his own order and inſtitution.

Thirdly, He was of a very tender and impreſſive heart, mourning for public ſins and dangers; chap. xxxiv. 26, 27. "Becauſe "thy heart was tender, and thou didſt humble thyſelf before God, "when thou heardeſt his words againſt this place, and againſt "the inhabitants thereof; and humbledſt thyſelf before me, and "didſt rend thy cloaths and weep before me," *&c.* He was not ſo intent upon his own pleaſures, (though in the ſprightly vigour of youth) nor on the weighty concerns of the kingdom, as to forget the intereſt of God, and the greater concerns of his glory.

Fourthly, He was exceeding careful to propagate the intereſt of religion, and ſpread it far and wide among his people. Though he could not infuſe the *inward principle*, (that was the work of God) yet he did enjoin the *external practice* of it upon all his ſubjects; which was his part and duty: chap. xxxiv. ver. 33. "He made all that were preſent in Iſrael to ſerve, even "not from the Lord their God. And all his days they departed "to ſerve following the God of their fathers."

But yet good Joſiah had his miſtakes and failings. The beſt of men are but men at beſt: He was too raſh and haſty in reſolving, and too ſtiff and obſtinate when reſolved; and this was the occaſion of his ruin. The caſe was thus:

Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt, was at that time making war upon Charchemiſh, a place that belonged to him, but was taken from him by the king of Aſſyria; ſo the war of Necho was a juſt war; and Judah lying between him and Charchemiſh, and being at peace with Judah, he requeſts leave of Joſiah to march his army peaceably through his country to the ſeat of war: Joſiah takes an alarm from this meſſage, and arms againſt him. Hereupon Necho ſent ambaſſadors to Joſiah, chap. xxxv. ver. 21. ſaying, "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Ju-"dah? I come not againſt thee this day, but againſt the houſe "wherewith I have war: For God commanded me to make "haſte; forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with "me, that he deſtroy thee not."

Expoſitors conceive Necho had this diſcovery of the mind of God, from the prophet Jeremiah, *Per oraculum non ſcriptum, ſed viva voce editum* *: even by word of mouth. If ſo, no doubt Jeremiah alſo diſſuaded Joſiah from going out againſt him: however, this is clear, Joſiah did not conſult the mind of God about that expedition, as he ought, and was too haſty and reſolute therein; chap. xxxv. 22. "Nevertheleſs Joſiah would not turn

* Jerom. a Lapide, Juſt. Mart.

"his face from him," *&c.* By this means this excellent man came to a tragical end, and that in the very flower of his days. He dies in that unhappy expedition, from which he would not be diverted; is brought home to Jerusalem in the second chariot; dies, and is buried in the sepulchre of his fathers, to the universal sorrow of all good men in Israel, as you read in the text; wherein we have these two parts to consider;

I. The nature and quality of the lamentation.

II. The cause and ground of it.

1. For the lamentation here made, it was extraordinary; never such cries heard before in Israel at any funeral, whether we consider it either,

1. Extensively,
2. Intensively, or,
3. Protensively.

1. *Extensively*, All Judah and Jerusalem, that is, city and country mourned that day; not every individual, but all that had any sense of the worth of the man, the good that he did, or the evils that followed upon his removal. No doubt the priests of Baal, their abettors and associates, secretly rejoiced at his fall; but all good men mourned. But among all the mourners, one is only specified by name, and that is Jeremiah the prophet, in whom all the faithful ministers of God were included. To them he was a true and faithful friend; and in him they lost a father, and a famous instrument of reformation.

2. Consider it *Intensively*, as to the degree of the sorrow, it was a bitter lamentation; so pungent, intense, and deep, that the mourning of the Jews for Christ, at the time of their conversion to him, is compared to this mourning for Josiah, Zech. xii. 11. "In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." This Hadadrimmon was a little town in the valley of Megiddon near the place of this fatal battle, whose inhabitants receiving the first tidings of the fall of Josiah, made the town ring with doleful cries and lamentations.

3. Lastly, Consider it *Protensively*, in its continuance and duration, it was "made an ordinance in Israel;" and accordingly "the singing-men and singing-women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day:" *i. e.* Whenever any solemn funeral or public calamity was solemnized in Israel, those persons that were skilful in lamentations, brought in the story of Josiah's death, as the burden of that doleful song or funeral elegy.

III. Let us consider the cause and ground of this lamentation, which certainly was great and weighty enough to justify that sorrow, as great and bitter as it was: for in him they lost a faithful, public, useful, zealous, and tender-hearted instrument, whose life had been eminently useful to the church of God, and whose death opened the gap to all the following calamities upon Judah.

Now, considering Josiah here, especially in his religious capacity, as so faithful, industrious, and useful an instrument for the church of God, rather than in his political capacity as a king, the note from it will be this,

Doct. *That faithful, active, and public-spirited men in the church of God, should not be laid in their graves without great lamentations.*

When Jacob was buried, a man famous for religion, a great and sore lamentation was made for him, Gen. l. 10. And when Aaron died, all the house of Israel mourned for him thirty days, Numb. xx. 29. When Stephen the proto-martyr died, devout men carried him to his grave with great lamentations, Acts viii. 2. and indeed for any good man to be laid in his grave without lamentation, is lamentable. The living saints have ever paid this respect and honour to dead saints, as men sensible of their worth, and how great a loss the world sustains by their removal.

I know the departed souls of saints have no concernment in these things, yet respect is due to their very bodies, as the temples wherein God hath been served and honoured, as they are related to Christ, who will one day put great glory and honour upon them.

In the explication and confirmation of this point, I will shew you,

1. *Negatively*, On what account the death of good men is not to be lamented.
2. *Positively*, On what account tears and lamentations are due to them, with the grounds and reasons thereof.

1. *Negatively*, There is not a tear or sigh due to the death of any good man, upon the account of any real loss or detriment that he sustains thereby. No, no, in this case all tears are restrained, all sorrow prohibited, by the principles and rules of Christianity, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. Religion differences the sorrows, as well as the joys of its professors, from the common joys and sorrows of the world. Dead saints are better where they are, than where they were; to be with Christ is far better; death to them is gain and infinite advantage, Phil. i. 21, 23. This world is the worst place that ever God designed

people to live in; for if a ſtate of perfect holineſs and purity, be better than a ſtate of temptation and corruption; if a ſtate of reſt and peace, be better than a ſtate of labour and ſorrow; if it be better to be triumphing above, than ſighing and groaning beneath; then it is better for departed Chriſtians to be where they are, than where they were. And could they now communicate their minds to us by words, as they lately did, they would ſay to us as Chriſt ſaid, Luke xxiii. 28. "Daughters "of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and "for your children." Or, as he ſpake to his diſciples under their ſad reſentments of his departure, John xiv. 28. "If ye "loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I go to the Father." So then no tears or ſorrows are due to them, or becoming us, upon the account of any real loſs or detriment they receive by death.

2. *Poſitively.* But the true grounds and cauſes of our lamentation, are upon divers other weighty accounts: as,

Firſt, Becauſe ſo much of the Spirit of God as dwelt in them, when amongſt us, is now recalled and gathered up from this lower world. Thoſe precious graces which they exerciſed among us, in prayer, conference, and other beneficial duties, are now gone with them to heaven.

1. *Reaſon.*

The church had the benefit of them during their abode with men, but now no more, except only what the remembrance of their holy words and inſtructive examples (whereby they ſtill ſpeak to us, though dead) may afford unto us.

There are choice effuſions of the Spirit, at the time of our ſanctification, of which the church reapeth the benefit whilſt we live; but all theſe are recalled at our diſſolution, and thenceforth we can be no farther uſeful in this lower world: for as the ſoul is the ſubject in which theſe precious graces inhere, ſo they accompany and go along with the ſoul into glory.

Now, as it is a real loſs to a company, when any merchant withdraws a great ſtock he had running in trade, out of the bank; ſo certainly it is a great loſs to the church of God, when the precious gifts and graces of the Spirit, dwelling in the ſaints, are drawn out by death; ſo as the church can have no farther benefit by them, their prayers for us, and with us, are now ended; Abraham knoweth us not, and Iſrael is ignorant of us.

Secondly, The death of the ſaints deſerves a bitter lamentation, becauſe thereby a breach is made, a gap opened, to let in the judgments of God upon the remnant

2. *Reaſon.*

that is left. It is said of Moses, Psal. cvi. 23. "Therefore "he said, that he would destroy them, had not Moses his cho- "sen stood before him in the breach, lest he should destroy "them." A metaphor from a besieged city, when a breach is made in the walls, and an enemy ready to enter; but some champion stands in the breach to defend the city. Such a champion was Moses, who by his constant and fervent prayers, put a stop to the inundation of God's judgments against Israel. And such another was Lot, Gen. xix. 22. whose prayers for that wicked place he lived in, bound up the hand of judgment, insomuch as the Lord told him, *I can do nothing till thou art gone.* But when the Lord by death removes such men, he thereby *makes a way to his anger*, as the expression is, Psal. lxxviii. 50. Hence the death of eminent saints, especially when many are taken away at or near the same time, hath been ever looked upon as a direful omen, and dreadful presage of ensuing judgments, and that not without good scripture-authority, Isa. lvii. 1. "The righteous perish, and no man layeth it "to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none consider- "ing that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

Thus Methuselah, whose very name signified *a flood cometh*, died the year before the flood: Augustine, a little before the sacking of Hyppo: Paraeus, a little before the taking of Heidelberg: And Luther, before the wars broke out in Germany. Death, as a *pioneer*, clears the way to a troop of miseries following after. This, therefore, is a just and weighty ground of our lamentations for the death of useful and godly men.

Thirdly, The beauty and ornaments of the places they lived in, are defaced and removed by their death; they look not like themselves, when the godly are removed out of them: for as wicked men are the spots and blemishes, so good men are the beauty and ornaments of their country. A good man was wont to say of Mr. Barrington of Barrington-hall, in Essex, Methinks the town is not at home, when Mr. Barrington is out of town. How desolate and dismal doth a family look (whatever other ornaments be about it) when the religious governor of it is gone! Take away good men from their families and country; and what are they but like a vineyard when the vintage is past? as the prophet speaks, Micah vii. 1. 3. *Reason.*

Fourthly, The death of good men deserves a bitter lamentation, because thereby the passage of the gospel, and propagation of religion, is obstructed in the places from whence they are removed. Of how great use 4. *Reason.*

in a country may one zealous public-ſpirited man be? Hundreds may have cauſe to bleſs God for ſuch a man. It was the apoſtle's deſire to the Theſſalonians, "to pray that the word of "the Lord may have its free courſe, that it might run and be "glorified," 2 Theſſ. iii. 1. The removal of ſuch a perſon as naturally took care for the ſouls of thoſe that were about him, to provide food for them, is no ſmall loſs, nor lightly to be paſſed over.

Fifthly, The conſideration of the time in which good men die, aggravates the loſs, and juſtly inceneſes the ſorrow of them that remain, and that upon a threefold account. (1.) That it falls out in the declining ſtate of religion, when the ſpirit and power of godlineſs is ſo much weakened and impoveriſhed. This is like the loſs of good blood in a conſumptive body, which muſt bring it very low. (2.) That it falls out alſo in a time when the numbers of the godly are ſo much thinned and leſſened, not when the church's children ſay in her ears, the place is too ſtrait, give place that we may dwell: but when they are every where lamenting the paucity of good men, as the pſalmiſt did, Pſal. xii. 1. "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth, for the right-"teous fail from among the children of men." At a time when they are bewailing themſelves in the language of the prophet, Micah vii. 1. "Woe is me, for I am as when they have ga-"thered the ſummer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vin-"tage: there is no cluſter to eat: my ſoul deſired the firſt "ripe fruit." Alluding to a hungry man that goes into a vineyard to refreſh his ſpirits with the fruit thereof; but, alas! there is not one pleaſant bunch to be found, none but ſour grapes, to increaſe his hunger, and ſet his teeth on edge. (3.) And that which more aggravates the loſs, is this; when it falls in a time wherein the ſpring and ſucceſſion of good men is obſtructed. In this caſe death, like a ſtorm of wind, overturns the faireſt, pleaſanteſt, and moſt fruitful trees in the *orchard*, when there is no *nurſery*, from whence others may be taken to plant in their rooms.

5. *Reaſon.*

Laſtly, There is juſt cauſe to lament the removal of public and pious men, when we conſider what influence our ſins and provocations have had upon thoſe judgments and calamities; our unworthineſs of them, unthankfulneſs for them, and non-improvements of *ſuch* mercies, have bereaved us of them. I look upon every good man, as a good book, lent by its owner to another to read, and tranſcribe the excellent notions and golden paſſages that are in it;

6. *Reaſon.*

for his own benefit, that they may remain with him, when the owner shall call for the book again: But in case this excellent book shall be thrown into a corner, and no use made of it, it justly provokes the owner to take it away in displeasure.

Thus you see upon what account our sorrows for the death of good men are restrained, and upon what accounts and reasons they are a due debt to the death of eminent and useful instruments for God. What remains, is the application of this point. And,

1. *Use. First*, The point before us justly reproves three sorts of men.

1. The worst of men, such as secretly rejoice, and are inwardly glad at the removal of such men; they took no delight in them while they lived, and are glad they are rid of them when they are dead. Those that persecuted and hated them when alive, may be presumed to be pleased and gratified with their death. But, alas! poor creatures, they know not what they do! The innocent preserve the island. "Except the "Lord of hosts (saith the prophet) had left us a small remnant, "we had been as Sodom, we had been like unto Gomorrah," Isa. i. 9). It is a proverb among the very Jews, *Sine supplicationibus non staret mundus*: The world stands by the prayers of the godly. Let the world think what they will of them, I tell you these men are a screen, a partition wall, betwixt them and destruction.

2. It reproves the insensibleness of good men, who are apt too slightly to pass over such tremendous strokes of God: For this it was that God reproved his own people, Isa. lvii. 1. *No man layeth it to heart*. Where the want of *affection* is charged upon the want of *consideration*, none considering their worth, their use, or the consequences of their fall. Such rebukes of God do certainly call for a deeper sense and sorrow, than is found in most men.

3. It reproves the very best of men, who though they do bewail and lament the loss of such men, yet they do not lament it in the due manner. They lament it one to another, saying, Alas! alas, such a worthy is fallen, such an eminent instrument in the church or state is dead; but they do not lament it in prayer to the Lord, they mourn not over the matter to him, as David did, Psal. xii. 1. "Crying, Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth." Help, Lord, the remnant that is left; help, Lord, to repair the breach made by their death; let the God of the spirits of all flesh raise up a man to fill the room,

and ſupply the want. Alas, how inſignificant are the lamentations of moſt men upon this account.

Uſe 2. *Secondly*, This point invites us all this day to bewail the ſtroke of God that is upon us. I could wiſh that he that looks upon this text, and then upon the countenance of this aſſembly, might be able to diſcern the agreeableneſs of the one to the other, on ſuch a ſad and ſolemn occaſion.

O let all that love Zion lament, this day, the fall of one of her true friends and lovers. I know funeral *panegyries* are apt to be ſuſpected of flattery; but as I want a rhetorical tongue for ſuch a work, ſo if I had it, it ſhould never be ſaleable for ſo baſe a uſe and purpoſe. I am ſure, by ſending the generality that die to heaven, many are confirmed in the way to hell: Nor can I but think of that ſerious line in Chryſoſtom, 'What 'poor comfort is it to be praiſed, where a man is not; and to be 'tormented, where he is:' "But yet the righteous ſhall be had "in everlaſting remembrance," Pſal. cii. 6. Expect nothing from me on this occaſion, but what may be ſpoken with the greateſt aſſurance of truth, and that intended for the benefit and imitation of all that hear it. Some may think it a ſtrain too high, to compare a private perſon with ſuch a glorious king as Joſiah was; but if Chriſt compared and preferred the very graſs of the field to Solomon in all his glory, I know no reaſon why we may not compare and parallel the precious graces of a private perſon with a royal ſaint; eſpecially ſince the compariſon is made in the *religious*, not in the *civil* capacity.

I am ſure the graces, and gracious performances of David, Hezekiah, and Joſiah, with all the other dignified ſaints, were intended and propounded as patterns for our imitation; and no doubt, but private Chriſtians may meaſure by their pattern. Beſide, it is abundantly more ſafe to relate the virtues of the ſaints when they are dead, than whilſt they were alive; for now there is no danger of provoking pride and vain-glory in them that are praiſed, but much hope of provoking a holy emulation and imitation in them that hear them.

Well then, *Abſit invidia verbis*: Suffer me this day to erect a pillar, to perpetuate the memory of this deceaſed worthy; to pay the tribute of my tears due to that mournful *hearſe*; and to engage you to imitate thoſe excellencies of his, which I ſhall, with equal truth and modeſty, diſplay this day; that we alſo may be duly affected with the rebuke of God upon us, and mourn over it before him.

If, when an eminent *commander* in any army falls, the whole army is affected with, and concerned at his death;

The mourning drum, the lance and ensigns trail'd,
The robes of honour all in sables vail'd.

Let it not be thought much, Christians should express their sense and sorrow in sighs and tears, for so useful and worthy a man as God hath this day removed from among us; whose character I shall give you in the following imitable particulars.

1. That worthy man, whose fall we lament this day, was seasoned with religion in his youth, by God's blessing upon his pious education: In this he had the advantage of Josiah. His progenitors were men of piety, and himself a child of many prayers: and, as Monica said of her son Austin, it was not likely that a child of so many prayers should perish. How importunately did they request the fervent prayers of their pious friends for him, in the time of his education? Nor was it in vain, for they were manifestly answered in him: He soon discovered that *probity* and *piety* in his youth, which justly raised great expectations from him in his riper years.

2. Nor did he frustrate those hopes; for as soon as ever God had fixed him in a proper *sphere* of activity (I mean, a family of his own) those graces that were in him shone forth to the comfort and benefit of all that were about him: Joshua's pious resolution was his; "As for me, and my house, we will serve "the Lord."

He kept up the worship of God in his closet, as well as in his family; And truly, if religion languish in the closet, it will quickly die in the family. His house was a *temple* consecrated to God; there the morning and evening sacrifices of prayers and praises were offered up: He called his children and servants to those duties, not reckoning that time lost to him which was spent for God. The Lord had endowed him with an excellent spirit of prayer himself. I have sometimes accidentally heard him praying in his family, with such solidity of judgment, pertinency of expressions, and holy warmth of affection, that hath at once edified, refreshed, and reproved me in hearing him.

He constantly read the scriptures in course before prayer, and oft-times with a *commentary* upon them, for his own and his family's edification.

The Lord's day he sanctified, not only in more public attendance on the ordinances, but in the duties of reading, repeating, singing, and catechising all his children and servants about him: And all this before he allowed himself or them any bodily refreshments, lest the edge of their affections should be blunt-

ed in duty, by the clogging of nature with creature-repaſts. And thus did he, as Job, continually: to this courſe he was ſevere and conſtant; no incident occaſions, how great or many ſoever, could divert him from it.

3. Neither was his holy zeal and Chriſtian care limited and circumſcribed within his own family, but was extended to the ſouls of all in his neighbourhood, who deſired helps and means in the way of ſalvation.

His houſe was ſeldom without a godly miniſter in it; and loth he was to eat his pleaſant morſels alone. It was the joy of his heart to ſee his houſe filled on this account: How many witneſſes to the truth of this are here this day! Like another Joſeph, he provided food for your ſouls; he loved, honoured, received, and encouraged the miniſters of the goſpel in their deepeſt ſufferings; gave them opportunities of ſervice, when ſome durſt not own them, and others violently perſecuted them.

4. When God called him to public employments in the common-wealth, he neither purchaſed, nor abuſed that truſt; but with a true Engliſh, rather a Chriſtian, zeal and courage, he dedicated himſelf to the ſervice of God and his country; chearfully quitting all domeſtic concerns, ſpent his eſtate, time, and pains, to heal the breaches of England. I know not a man, whoſe zeal for the common good would have carried him nearer to the example of that noble Roman, who, when a *chaſm* was made by an earthquake, and the *oracle* had declared, that it could never be cloſed, except ſomething of value was thrown into it, caſt in himſelf to cloſe it.

I could truly have ſaid, had there been conveniency and opportunity for it, when he was laid in his grave, 'Here lies a 'man, that never betrayed nor deſerted the public, for any pri'vate intereſt of his own.'

5. He was a man that came as near Joſiah in tenderneſs of heart, as ever I had the happineſs to be acquainted with. The church's troubles were his troubles; they all met in him as lines in a centre; he even lived and died with the intereſt of religion: And of him I will ſay, as the apoſtle ſaid of Timothy, Phil. ii. 20, 21. "I have no man like-minded, who will "naturally care for your ſtate, for all ſeek their own, not the "things which are Jeſus Chriſt's." *Naturally*, in this place, is not oppoſed to *ſpiritually*, but to *artificially*. Many can *artificially* act the part of a zealot, when their own intereſt lies in it; but he *naturally*, and therefore, freely, chearfully, and conſtantly.

6. But though these excellencies were in him, he had his *noevi*, blemishes, and imperfections. Elias was a man of like passions and weaknesses of spirit. All these, I doubt not, but God hath covered, and he is now perfectly freed from them all.

There is now no passion left within him to be stirred by temptation; no despondencies and sinkings of spirit under dismal aspects of providence. His graces are perfected, and his corruptions finally eradicated.

7. To conclude; He was a man of great *afflictions*, as well as tender *affections*. And as the Lord greatly honoured him in the course of *active obedience*, so he greatly proved and tried him in a course of *passive obedience*. He not only gave the *cross* in his *coat*, but bare it upon his *shoulders*: For besides those troubles, which were properly *sympathetical*, he had his *idiopathetical* sufferings also, and that both from the hands of men, and from the hand of God. His piety made and marked him for an object of persecution; the archers shot at him, and sorely grieved him; he and his family were hunted with a net:- The Lord lay it not to their charge; *Et hinc illae lachrymae.* The sad effects thereof, I chose rather at this time to pass over with a sigh, than in this place to commemorate.

And as the hand of man was upon him, so the hand of his God also: first lopping off all the pleasant branches that sprang from him, and that one after another, when come to the endearing age, opening and disclosing the bud; and, as the complement and issue of all, breaking his constitutional strength with a long languishing disease, which at last extinguished this bright lamp, and hath left his family and neighbourhood in darkness and sorrow. His poor heart was the *anvil* on which many *hammers* of affliction had been a long time beating; and no wonder it appeared relaxed and tumified, when it was inspected, having endured so many successive strokes of sorrow.

And now what the Lord spake of Israel, in Jer. xi. 16. is fulfilled upon this worthy person: "The Lord called thy name "a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise "of a great tumult he hath kindled a fire upon it, and the "branches of it are broken."

Use 3. *Thirdly*, I shall wind up the whole in several seasonable and necessary counsels; some more general, others more particular, and some most particularly and especially.

First, Counsel to all in general, to awaken themselves, and recover a due sense of such sore rebukes of God as this is.

When Saul fell, "David lamented it, saying, The beauty of "Israel was slain on thy high places."

God hath this day stript off an ornament from this country. Such dispensations of Providence speak indignations coming on: It requires almost an age to breed and furnish a man with due qualifications for the service of the church and common-wealth. England doth not so abound with pious, zealous, and faithful gentlemen at this time, but that it may sensibly feel the loss of such a man.

Secondly, More particularly, let the *ministers* of Christ lament his fall, as Jeremiah did the fall of Josiah in the text. He was a true friend to Christ's faithful ministers, and had them in honour for their work's sake. It is true, he hath no more need of us, he is now wiser than his teachers; but we greatly need him, and men of his spirit, in such a dull degenerate age as we live in.

Thirdly, And most particularly, I shall apply and close all with a few words of counsel to the dear and now *desolate relict* of this worthy person, whose sad lot it is this day, to over-live the mercies and comforts she once enjoyed in him.

Madam, God hath this day covered you with sables, written bitter things against you, broken you with breach upon breach. Your sorrows need not be excited, but regulated. It is my trouble, that I cannot discharge my duty to the memory of your dear husband, without exasperating your griefs, which, alas, were too acute before; but rods have their voices; "Blessed is "the man whom God correcteth, and teacheth him out of his "law." Hear you the rod, and who hath appointed it; and, oh! that your soul may this day take in these necessary counsels and cautions, without which your afflictions cannot be sanctified to the advantage of your soul! And,

1. Learn from hence the vanity of the creature, the emptiness, and nothingness of the best things here below. How hath God made your best comforts on earth to shrink up and vanish into nothing? How do our fancies varnish and gild over these empty bubbles? What great expectations are we apt to raise from them? How apt to fall asleep in the bosoms or laps of earthly enjoyments, and say, with Job, "I shall die in my nest, "and multiply my days as the sand?" When lo, in a moment, the projects and expectations of many years are overturned. O what a difference will you find betwixt hope founded in Christ, comforts drawn out of the promises, and the flattering comforts and vain hopes founded in the creature, whose breath is in its nostrils?

It is time for you, and for us all, to wean off from this vain world; mortify our fancies and affections to it, and place them where they ſhall not be capable of diſappointment.

2. Guard carefully, I beſeech you, againſt thoſe temptations which probably may accompliſh this affliction. It may be Satan will ſuggeſt to your heart, what he once put into their lips; Mal. iii. 14. "What profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and walked mournfully before him?" Where is the fruit of prayer? What good have I ſeen of faſting? What hath religion availed? Do not prayerleſs and ungodly families thrive and proſper? Beware of this. *Madam*, I doubt not but you will acknowledge, there have been ſins and provocations within your walls, yea, within your heart, for which God may juſtly and ſeverely judge your houſe as he did Eli's. Remember the rewards of religion are not in this world; and ſhould we ſpeak thus, we ſhall offend againſt the generation of his children. All we muſt expect from religion, is to ſave our ſouls by it.

3. Call not the love of God into queſtion to yourſelf, or yours, becauſe of theſe ſevere ſtrokes of God upon you and them: You know Joſiah was dear to God, yet he died in the prime of his days, by a violent hand, remote from his own home, and was brought home in the *ſecond chariot to Jeruſalem;* a ſpectacle of far greater ſorrow than your dear huſband was; and yet, notwithſtanding all theſe ſad circumſtances of his death, the promiſe of his God was punctually performed to him, that he ſhould die in peace, and not behold the evil that was to come. "There is a vanity (ſaith Solomon) which is "done upon the earth, that there be juſt men unto whom it "happeneth according to the work of the wicked: Again, "there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the "work of the righteous," Eccl. viii. 14. But then remember, that it is but in the earth; here, or no where, God muſt chaſtiſe his children.

4. See that you maintain that holy courſe of religious exerciſes in your family, and in your cloſet, wherein he walked ſo exemplarily before you. Let religion live, though he be dead; and convince the world, I pray you, that it was God's influence, and not your huſband's only, which was the ſpring and principle of this holy courſe.

5. Strive not with your Maker, nor fret againſt the Lord, under this irkſome and painful diſpenſation: Remember, there is a *woe* hanging over this ſin; Iſa. xlv. 9, 10. *Woe to him that ſtriveth with his Maker.* There is a twofold ſtriving of men

with God, one lawful and commendable; when we ſtrive with him upon the knee of importunity in prayer; thus Jacob wreſtled with God, and prevailed, Hoſ. xii. 4. The other is highly ſinful and dangerous, when we preſume to cenſure, or accuſe any of his works, as defective in wiſdom or goodneſs. He that reproveth God, let him anſwer it, *i. e.* At his peril be it. This ſinful ſtriving with God is two-fold; either *vocal* or *mental*.

1. *Vocal*, When men, in bold blaſphemous language, arraign the wiſdom, power, goodneſs, or faithfulneſs of the Lord, at the bar of their own reaſon; and there condemn them, ſetting their mouths againſt the heavens, Pſalm lxxiii. 8, 9. This is the ſin of the wicked, yea, of the firſt-born ſons of wickedneſs.

2. *Mental*, In inward frets, murmurs, repinings againſt God; Prov. xix. 3. "The fooliſhneſs of man perverts his way, and "his heart fretteth againſt the Lord." The heart may cry out impatiently againſt God, when the tongue is ſilent: And if the frets and murmurs of the heart be (as indeed they are) interpretatively no better than a ſtriving with our Maker; then this ſin would be found more common among good men in the *paroxyſms* of affliction, than we imagine. It will be neceſſary therefore, for your ſake, and for the ſakes of many more in a like ſtate of affliction with you, to ſtay a while on this head, and conſider theſe following queries.

Query I. How far may we enquire of God, expoſtulate, and complain in times of affliction, without ſin?

Query II. Wherein lies the ſinfulneſs and danger of exceeding theſe bounds?

Query III. What conſiderations are moſt proper and powerful to reſtrain the afflicted ſoul from this ſinful exceſs?

Query 1. How far we may enquire of God, expoſtulate with him, and complain to him in times of affliction, without ſin?

Sol. 1. We may humbly enquire into the cauſes and reaſons of God's diſpleaſure againſt us, not to ſeek matter for our *juſtification*, but *direction* in the work of our *humiliation*: ſo David enquired about the three years famine, and the Lord informed him, for whoſe ſake, and for what ſin it was, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. And thus Job addreſſed to him in the day of his affliction, Job x. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me*, *i. e.* convince me, what ſpecial ſin it is, for which I am thus afflicted. This is ſo far from being our ſin, that it is both our duty, and the excellency of our ſpirits: it is a child-like tem-

ber, willing to know, that we may be particularly humbled for that sin, and for ever the more careful to shun it. "That "which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I "will do so no more," Job xxxiv. 32. Thus far we are safe.

2. We may plead by prayer, and put him in mind of his mercies, relations, and promises, in order to the change of his providential dispensations towards us: We may say to him under the smartest rod, as the church did, "Doubtless thou art "our Father," Psalm lxxiv. 20. Have respect to the covenant; or as Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 9, 12. "Thou saidst, I will "surely do thee good."

3. We may complain to God under our sufferings, and spread them before him in all their circumstances and aggravations, as Job, Heman, Asaph, Hezekiah and David did. He allows his children to complain to him, but not of him: "I poured out "my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trou-"ble," Psal. cxlii. 2. To whom should a child make his complaint, but to his father? So far we are safe.

4. We may submissively pray for the removal of his hand from us, and entreat, that his anger may cease, and that he will turn again and heal us and our families, and not draw forth his anger for ever. So did David, Psalm xxxix. 10. "Remove thy stroke away from me; I am consumed by the "blow of thine hand;" *q. d* Ah, Lord, I am not able to endure another stroke. All this while, we are safe, within the bounds of our duty. But then,

Query 2. Wherein lies our sin and danger, in exceeding these bounds? I answer,

Sol. When forgetting God's sovereignty, and the desert of our iniquities, we arrogantly censure his effecting, or permitting providences, as if they had no conducency to his own glory, or our good. This is both sinful and dangerous: For,

1. This is a proud exalting of our own reason and understanding above the infinite wisdom of God. God hath made our reason a *judge* and *arbiter* in matters within its own *sphere* and *province*; but when it comes to summon God to its bar, and article against heaven, it is an insufferable arrogancy; and we do it at our own peril. God will have all men know, that he is an unaccountable being, Job xxxiii. 13. Yea, he will have us to know, that the "foolishness of God is wiser than "men," 1 Cor. i. 25. That is, that those very works of God, which man's proud reason adventures to censure as not so wise a method as their own would be, hath more wisdom in them,

than all the deep-laid deſigns of the greateſt politicians in the world. And it is ſtrange that men ſhould dare to attempt ſuch a wickedneſs as this, after God hath ſo ſeverely puniſhed it in the fallen angels.

2. It is no leſs than a ſpurning at the ſovereignty of God, from whoſe pleaſure we derive our beings, and all our mercies, Rev. iv. 11. In theſe quarrellings at providence, and frets at divine appointments, we invade his throne, and controul his ſovereign pleaſure. How monſtrous were it to hear a child quarrelling with his father, that he was not ſo and ſo figured; or the clay to chide the *potter* for moulding it as it is?

3. It is deſtructive to our inward peace and tranquillity of mind, which is part of the puniſhment of this ſin; and a ſmart ſtripe, a ſore rebuke it is from the hand of God upon us.

Contention is uncomfortable, though but with a neighbour, worſe with a near relation; but a quarrel with God is deſtructive to all comfort in the world. Afflictions may diſturb a good man's peace; but a mutinous ſpirit againſt God, deſtroys and ſtabs it at the very heart. What is the ſin and torment of the devils, but their rage againſt the Lord, and ſwelling againſt the methods of his grace? "He ſeeketh reſt, but findeth "none," Matth. xii. 43. The peace of our ſpirit is a choice mercy, and might be maintained amidſt all our afflictions, were but our intereſt in his promiſes, and the true level of his providences cleared to us.

4. It is irrational, and highly unjuſt, to give the cauſe, and quarrel at the *effects*. God hath righteouſly and inſeparably linked *penal* with *moral* evils; ſin and ſorrow, by the laws of heaven are tacked and linked together; he that doth evil, ſhall feel evil, Gen. iv. 7. We adventure upon ſin, and then fret at affliction, Prov. xix. 3. "The fooliſhneſs of man "perverts his way, and his heart fretteth againſt the Lord." Is this becoming a reaſonable creature? Doth not every man reap as he ſoweth? Can the ſeed of ſin bring forth a crop of peace and comfort? "Why doth the living man complain, a "man for the puniſhment of his ſins?" Lam. iii. 39. Search your hearts, and ſearch your houſes, and you will quickly find that all your afflictions in this world, were they ten thouſand times more, and heavier than they are, do not come near to the deſert of one ſin. All ſorrows, loſſes, afflictions on this ſide hell, are quite below the value of ſin, the meritorious and provoking cauſe of them all.

5. It is fooliſh and vain, to ſtrive againſt God, and contend

perverſely with him. Can our diſcontents relieve us *? Or our murmurs eaſe us? Will they turn God out of his way? No, no, *He is in one mind, and who can turn him aſide?* Job xxiii. 13. The wheels of providence go ſtraight forward, and turn not when they go, Ezek. i. 17. We may bring them over us to cruſh us, by ſtanding thus in their way; but cannot turn them out of their way.

"If they ſtill walk contrary to me, then will I walk contrary "to you, and puniſh you yet ſeven times for your ſins," Lev. xxiii. 14. Or I will walk in the raſhneſs of mine anget †, ſmiting you without moderation, as men do in their rage and fury. This is all we ſhall get by fretting againſt God. Never expect relief under, or releaſe from the yoke God hath laid on your necks, till you be brought to accept the puniſhment of your iniquities, Lev. xxvi. 41.

6. It is a ſin full of *odious ingratitude* towards your God: Which appears (1.) In murmuring becauſe it is ſo bad, when we ſhould be admiring that it is no worſe. Are there not millions in hell that never ſinned at higher rates than you have done? Is this affliction as bad as hell? Hath God pardoned you and ſaved you, and yet doth he deſerve to be thus requited by you? (2.) In murmuring that our condition is ſo bad, when we may every day ſee others in a far worſe caſe, who are equal with us by nature, and we are equal with them in guilt and provocation. If we ſpeak of outward afflictions, certainly others would be glad to exchange conditions with us, and account themſelves happy in our circumſtances. Conſider the deſcription given of thoſe perſons, Job xxx. 3, 4, 5. And how little they differ in the manner of life from brute beaſts: And if we ſpeak of inward troubles, compare your own with thoſe of Heman, and Aſaph, in Pſalm lxxvii. and lxxxviii. and if both together, and that in an intenſe degree, conſider Job vi. 4. and you will ſoon find your condition full of ſparing mercy: Thoſe excellent perſons that were ſo much above you in grace, were yet plunged ſo much deeper than you into afflictions. And is it not then vile ingratitude in you, thus to mutiny and *charge your God fooliſhly?* (3.) But eſpecially here lies our ingratitude, in quarrelling and cenſuring thoſe providences, whoſe very end and errand is

* When a patient ſtruggles under the phyſician's hand he receives a ſmarter touch.

† בקרי *temere ambulabo*, *i. e.* I will walk raſhly.

our eternal good; Heb. xii. 10. "But he for our profit, that "we might be partakers of his holineſs."

7. It is a ſin that deprives us of the fruits and benefits of our afflictions: A tumultuous raging ſpirit reaps no good by the rod. The fruits of affliction are called the *peaceable fruits*, Heb. xii. 11. becauſe they are always gathered and reaped down by the afflicted ſoul in a quiet and peaceful temper: *Anima ſedendo, & quieſcendo fit ſapiens.* Bloſſoms and flowers open not in the boiſterous ſtorms of winter, but in the mild and gentle ſpring.

Well then, be convinced of the ſin and danger of a diſcontented ſpirit under the hand of God, and inſtead of mourning over loſt relations, now mourn for the loſs of patience, the want of ſubmiſſion, and for the pride and arrogancy of your own reaſon, that preſumes to correct the works of the Almighty; and ſay to God, as Joſeph did to his father, when he wittingly croſſed his hands in bleſſing Ephraim and Manaſſeh, *Not ſo, my father.* This is not fit.

Query 3. But how may theſe evils be prevented or cured, and the tempeſtuous ſoul calmed under the rod? How ſhall all ſtrifes betwixt God and his people be ended, and the ſoul made quiet at his feet?

Reply. This bleſſed frame of ſpirit, may in a great degree and meaſure be attained in the uſe of the following *directions*: I ſay, in their uſe and application, not by the preſcription or ſimple knowledge of them. And,

Rule 1. The firſt rule, or direction is this: *Study well the glorious ſovereignty of God over you, and awe your hearts with the conſideration of it.* From his mere pleaſure, you, and all that is yours, proceeded; on his pleaſure you depend, and into that good pleaſure of his will, your wills therefore ought to be reſolved: "Whatever the Lord pleaſed, that he "did, in heaven and in earth, in the ſea and in all deep "places," Pſalm cxxxv. 6. Man and man ſtand on equal ground; and if our reaſon be not ſatisfied about the equity of mens dealings with us, we may aſk who did it, and demand the reaſons why he did it; but when we have to do with God, we muſt not diſpute his pleaſure. Let the potſherd ſtrive with the potſherds of the earth; but let not the clay diſpute with the *potter*. Now the ſovereignty of God is gloriouſly diſplayed in his *decrees*, *laws*, and *providences*. (1.) In his *decrees*, appointing the creatures to their ends, whether to be veſſels of mercy, or of wrath, Rom. ix. 18, 19, 20. In this caſe there muſt be no diſputing with God. (2.) In

his laws, appointing the work and duty of the creature, as also the rewards and punishments; James iv. 12. "There is one "Law-giver, that is able to save and to destroy." In this case his sovereignty immediately and indispensably binds the conscience of man, and no human authority can dissolve that obligation: Nor must we snuff at the severest command. (3.) The glorious sovereignty of God is displayed in his providential administrations, appointing every man to that station and condition in which he is in this world; whether it be high or low, prosperous or afflicted: Psalm lxxv. 6. "I said to the "fools, deal not foolishly, *&c.* for promotion cometh not from "the east, or the west, but God is Judge; he putteth down "one, and setteth up another." Let not them that are at the top of the world be lifted up; nor those that are at the bottom be dejected; for God casts every man's lot, and changeth their condition at his pleasure; a word of his mouth plucks down the lofty, and exalts the lowly; he woundeth, and his hands make whole. Hence it becomes the afflicted to be still, and know that he is God, Psalm. xlvi. 10. to put his mouth in the dust, and quietly to wait for his salvation: All our fretting and struggling cannot shake off the yoke which he hath put upon us; but a meek and quiet submission to his will, and compliance with his designs, is the best expedient to procure our freedom. There is not one circumstance of trouble befals you, without his order; nor can you expect deliverance, but by order from him.

Rule 2. *Study the transcendent evil of sin, and what the demerit of the least sin that ever you committed is.* This will becalm your tempestuous spirits, and at once work them into *contentation* with your present state, and *admiration* that it is no worse, Lam. iii. 22, 39, 40.

Consider, thou querulous and discontented soul, that the wages of sin is death, Rom. vi. *ult.* that tribulation, anguish, and wrath, are due, by law, to every soul of man that doth evil; that so often as we have sinned, so often have we deserved hell: and shall we then charge God with severity, for scourging us with the rods of gentle, fatherly, chastisements? Is this hell? Dare you say the severest affliction that ever was upon you, is above the demerit of your sin?

It is true, indeed, the Lord tells Jerusalem, that she had "received of his hand double for all her sins," Isa. xl. 2. But that is not the language of strict justice, but of compassions rolled together. There is not a gracious soul in all the world, but will readily subscribe Ezra's confession, that God hath af-

flicted it leſs than its iniquities deſerve, Ezra ix. 13. Oh! if once we meaſure our afflictions by our ſins, we ſhall admire they are ſo few, ſo mild and gentle as they are!

Rule 3. *Conſider, what a difference there is betwixt the ſaints meeting with afflictions, and their parting with them.* You meet them with trembling and aſtoniſhment, but you ſhall part with them with praiſe and thankſgiving; bleſſing God for the manifold bleſſings they have inſtrumentally conveyed to your ſouls. It is good for me, ſaith David, that I have been afflicted. By theſe things ſin is prevented, diſcovered, and mortified; the inſnaring world imbittered, and the reſt to come ſweetened.

Many other excellent rules may be added: try theſe, and the bleſſing of the Spirit accompany them.

To conclude; be not ſwallowed up of ſorrows for what you have loſt, but balance all the troubles of this life with the hopes of the next. Your dear children are gone, your ſweet huſband is gone; but conſider who took them, and whither. It is ſaid of Enoch, Gen. v. 24. "He walked with God, and "was not, for God took him." Mr. Upton is not, and yet he is; he is not with men, he is with God: he ceaſes *not to be*, though he ceaſes to *breathe*: he is taken away, but God took him: he is better where he is, than where he was: though he be not in your boſom, he is in Chriſt's.

Imitate his zeal, plain-heartedneſs, diligence in duties, and you ſhall ſhortly meet him again, and never part any more; 1 Theſſ. iv. 15, 16, 17, 18. "For this we ſay by the word of "the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain to the com-"ing of the Lord, ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep. "For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, "and with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: "and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt: Then we which are "alive, and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: And ſo ſhall we "ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another "with theſe words." Did you but know the deep *emphaſis* of theſe words, *ever with the Lord*; I doubt not, but you would find comfort enough in them for yourſelf, and a great overplus for the comforting of others.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE ASSEMBLY's CATECHISM,

With Practical Inferences from each Queſtion:

As it was carried on in the Lord's Days Exerciſes in Dartmouth, in the firſt Year of Liberty, 1688.

THE PREFACE.

THAT catechizing is an ordinance of God, few will doubt, when they conſider the apoſtles did firſt lay the ndamentals of religion; Heb. vi. 1. And "fed babes with milk, teaching them the firſt principles of the oracles of God," Heb. v. 12. and queſtionleſs taught them in that anner, which was moſt ſuitable to the capacity of the learn-s, which may well be ſuppoſed to be by plain and ſhort que-ons, and ſuitable anſwers thereunto; and therefore this has en a conſtant practice in the church of God; and the primi-e church had a particular perſon appropriated thereunto, om they called *Catechiſt*.

And ſo all well-governed, and wiſely managed churches, ve ſtill maintained and uſed it, as knowing the neceſſity and fulneſs thereof; for the younger ſort to inform them in the nciples of that religion whereinto they were baptized; and the eſtabliſhment of the adult and more aged therein.

Hence have iſſued thoſe little compoſures of all the funda-ntal doctrines of faith and practice ſo handled (which we l Catechiſms) in the churches; and particularly in ours, ereof there are many and divers, whoſe authors have well erved for their endeavours to inform and edify the people reby.

But among them all, none excel this little catechiſm of the ſembly, for orthodoxy, fulneſs, and method.

And becauſe the anſwers therein are ſome of them prett-

large, and treat of the moſt profound myſteries of our religion; therefore ſeveral perſons have beſtowed their good and laudable pains, ſome in deſcanting more largely, and proving by ſcriptural reaſons the particulars: one has ſhewn the harmony thereof with the articles and homilies of the church of England (deſigned, I ſuppoſe, to remove the prejudice which ſome have taken againſt it): others have parted the queſtions and anſwers into ſeveral little ones, under each, to make them more intelligible to younger ones, and more eaſy to be remembred.

Among whom, worthy, orthodox, and excellent Mr. John Flavel may be ranked, who among other of his many moſt profitable labours, applied himſelf to the chewing of this bread of life, or crumbling it into ſmaller pieces, for the convenience of children, and, indeed, of all; wherein (as in all his other works) he hath ſhewn himſelf a workman, that needs not to be aſhamed.

There needs no other recommendation to this Poſthumous piece, but the worthy author's name; he was removed before he had completely finiſhed it; he had prepared his queſtions and anſwers upon the ſecond petition of the *Lord's Prayer*; but lived not to propoſe them in the public congregation. God then tranſlated him into his kingdom of glory above, while he was ſo induſtriouſly endeavouring to promote the kingdom of grace below.

The other five remaining queſtions and anſwers (to complete the work) were done by a ruder hand; as may be eaſily diſcerned by any obſervant reader, who will find himſelf transferred from a plain, clear, and delightful ſtile, method and manner, into more rough, diſorderly and unpleaſant ones; for, who, indeed, could equal this divine labourer? Not the compleater; who would account himſelf to have made very great attainments in divinity and uſefulneſs, if he were left but a few furlongs behind him.

Let the reader uſe and peruſe this piece, and he will be cauſe to bleſs God for the author.

VALE.

To the READER.

THE Divine providence having unexpectedly caſt my lot, for a few days, in Dartmouth, where that bleſſed man of God, Mr. John Flavel, did for many years honour Chriſt, and

as honoured by him; I have been favoured with a sight of that most judicious explication of the Assembly's Catechism, which is emitted herewith.

Being desired to testify my respect to the worthy author, by prefacing this excellent labour of his with a few lines; I can truly say, (as sometimes Beza of Calvin), Now Mr. Flavel is dead, life will be less sweet, and death less bitter to me.

My heart bleeds to look on this desolate place, and not to see him, that, whilst living, was the glory of it.

But neither the author, nor his writings, stand in need of the commendation of others, much less of mine.

His works, already published, have made his name precious in both Englands; and it will be so, as long as the earth shall endure.

There are some considerations which may cause the reader to expect (and he will not find himself disappointed therein) that which is extraordinary in this little *manual*; for the author's heart was very much engaged in doing this service for Christ, in thus feeding his lambs. And he did himself design the publication of what is here committed to the press; and was very desirous (with an holy submission to the will of God) to have perfected this work before his decease; but had strange intimations that he should finish his course before that could be done.

When he did, *viva voce*, deliver his meditations, there were many enlargements, and lively passages, which are not here inserted: nevertheless, here is as much as he thought needful for public view, not being willing that his book should be voluminous.

In his last Catechetical exercise, concerning *Hallowing the name of God*, he was exceedingly enlarged; but he must himself go into the kingdom of glory, when he intended to have discoursed on that petition, *Thy kingdom come.*

He also began some meditations on the *Joys of heaven*; but before he had an opportunity to express what had been in his heart, the Lord Jesus said unto him, "Enter thou into the "joy of thy Lord." And thus doth it happen many times to the eminent and holy servants of God.

Another consideration, recommending what comes herewith, is, that it was amongst Mr. Flavel's last works. The (ἔξοδια ῥηματα) last sayings of wise and great men have been esteemed oraculous; and the Scripture puts an emphasis on *the last words of David*, the sweet singer of Israel, 2 Sam.

xxiii. 1. Not that thoſe were the laſt words that ever David ſpake, only they were written not long before his death, when he was come near heaven.

So was what is now put into the reader's hand, written by Mr. Flavel not long before his tranſlation to the world of ſouls, where the ſpirits of juſt men are made perfect.

There was a more than ordinary preſence of God with him to his laſt; and in his laſt day, not the laſt *ſermon* that he preached (which was June 21, 1691.) he did more than once ſurprize his hearers with an intimation, that that might be the laſt time he ſhould ſpeak to them in the name of the Lord. And was not then the ſecret of the Lord with him?

Dartmouth will know, and Devonſhire will know, that there has been a prophet among them.

And now my ſoul bleeds to look on the dear flock of God, which are as ſheep without a ſhepherd. The Lord Jeſus, the great Shepherd of the ſheep, have compaſſion on them, and give them a ſhepherd like to his bleſſed ſervant Flavel, who did for many years feed them with knowledge, and with underſtanding.

Dartmouth, March 21ſt, 1692. INCREASE MATHER.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE ASSEMBLY's SHORTER CATECHISM.

Queſtion I. *Of Man's chief End.*

WHAT is the chief end of man?

A. *Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.*

Q. 1. Seeing a chief ſuppoſeth an inferior end; what is that inferior end for which man was made?

A. It was prudently, ſoberly, and mercifully, to govern, uſe, and diſpoſe of other creatures in the earth, ſea, and air, over which God gave man the dominion; Gen. i. 26. And God ſaid, let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs:

and let him have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So Pſal. viii. 6. Thou madeſt him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou haſt put all things under his feet.

Q. 2. What then is to be thought of thoſe men, who being wholly intent upon inferior things, forget and neglect their principal end?

A. They are dead whilſt they live; 1 Tim. v. 6. But ſhe that liveth in pleaſure, is dead whilſt ſhe liveth: They have their portion in this life; Pſal. xvii. 14. From men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and their end is deſtruction; Phil. iii. 19. Whoſe end is deſtruction.

Q. 3. How can man glorify God, ſeeing he is perfectly glorious in himſelf?

A. Man cannot glorify God by adding any new degree of glory to him; Job xxxv. 7. If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him, but by manifeſting his glory with the lips? Pſal. l. 23. Whoſo offereth praiſe, glorifieth me; or with the life; Matth. v. 16. Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Q. 4. Wherein conſiſts the enjoyment of God?

A. It conſiſts, *firſt*, in the facial viſion of him in heaven. *Secondly*, in full conformity to him; 1 John iii. 2. But we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is. *Thirdly*, in that full ſatisfaction which reſults from both the former; Pſal. xvii. 15. I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs.

Q. 5. Can none enjoy him in heaven, who do not glorify him on earth?

A. No adult perſon can ſcripturally expect happineſs in heaven without holineſs on earth; Heb. xii. 14. And holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord. Rom. viii. 30. Whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

Q. 6. How comes the glory and enjoyment of God our chief end?

A. He is our Maſter, and rightful Owner and Benefactor; we receive our being and preſervation from him, of him, and through him, and therefore to him be all things, Rom. xi. 36.

Q. 7. Do all men make God their chief end?

A. No, they do not; ſome make their ſenſual pleaſure their chief end: Phil. iii. 19. Whoſe God is their belly: and

ſome the world, Col. iii. 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry.

Q. 8. What are the ſigns of a man's making himſelf his chief end?

A. Thoſe make themſelves their chief end, who aſcribe the glory of what they have, or do, to themſelves, and not to God; Dan iv. 30. The king ſpake, and ſaid, Is not this great Babylon which I have built? Iſa. x. 18. For he ſaith, By the ſtrength of my hand have I done it; and by my wiſdom, for I am prudent; therefore they ſacrifice to their own net, and burn incenſe unto their drag, Hab. i. 16.

Q. 9. Why are the glorifying and enjoying of God put together, as making up our chief end?

A. Becauſe no man can glorify God, that takes him not for his God; and none takes him for his God, that takes him not for his ſupreme good; and both theſe being eſſentially included in this notion of the chief end, are therefore juſtly put together.

Q. 10. What is the firſt truth inferred hence?

A. That God hath dignified man above all other creatures on earth, in giving him a capacity of glorifying God here, and of enjoying him hereafter.

Q. 11. What is the ſecond truth inferred hence?

A. That the ſoul of man is not annihilated by death, but advanced by it; Phil. i. 21. To die is gain. V. 23. Having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.

Q. 12. What is the third truth inferred hence?

A. That it is the duty and wiſdom of every Chriſtian to renounce, deny, and forſake all inferior intereſts and enjoyments, when they come in competition with the glory of God, and our enjoyment of him: Luke xiv. 33. So likewiſe whoſoever he be of you, that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple.

Q. 13. What is the fourth inference hence?

A. That we are to abhor and renounce all thoſe doctrines and practices, that debaſe the glory of God, and exalt and magnify the creature.

Of the Scriptures as our Rule.

Queſt. 2. WHat rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. *The word of God, which is contained in the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.*

Q. 1. How can the scriptures be called the word of God, being the things contained there, were spoken and written by men?

A. They are truly and properly called the word of God, because they came not by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost, 2 Pet. 1. 21.

Q. 2. What are the principal arguments to persuade us that the scriptures are of divine authority and inspiration?

A. Three things especially convince us: *First*, The holiness of the doctrine therein contained. *Secondly*, The awful efficacy thereof on the soul. *Thirdly*, The uncontroulable miracles by which they are sealed, put it beyond all rational doubt that they are the very words of God.

Q. 3. What is the holiness of the scriptures? and how doth that prove them to be God's word?

A. The holiness of the scriptures doth appear in two things: *First*, In commanding and encouraging whatsoever is pure, and holy; Phil. iv. 8. Whatsoever things are pure. *Secondly*, In forbidding all unholiness, under pain of damnation; 1 Cor. vi. 9. Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, *&c.* This shews that they came not from Satan, being cross to his design; nor from man, it being against his corrupt nature; and therefore from God only.

Q. 4. What is their authority and efficacy on the soul? and how doth that prove them divine?

A. Their authority, and efficacy on the soul, consists in three things: *First*, In the power they have to search and discover the secrets of men; Heb. iv. 12. The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. *Secondly*, In their converting efficacy, changing and renewing the soul; Psalm xix. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. *Thirdly*, In their chearing and restoring efficacy, when the soul is cast down under any inward or outward trouble; Psal. xix. 8. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. No human power can do such things as these; John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

Q. 5. How do miracles confirm it?

A. Because all proper miracles are wrought only by the hand of God: John iii. 2. And no man can do these miracles

that thou doſt, except God be with him: and ſo are his ſeal to whatſoever he affixes them, and it conſiſts not with his truth and holineſs to ſet it to a forgery.

Q. 6. What was the end of writing the word?

A. That the church to the end of the world might have a ſure, known, ſtanding rule to try and judge all things by, and not be left to the uncertainty of traditions; John v. 39. Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which teſtify of me.

Q. 7. Doth not the authority of the ſcriptures depend on the church, fathers, and councils?

A. No, the ſcriptures are not built on the authority of the church, but the church on them; Eph. ii. 20. And are built on the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone. And as for councils and fathers, the ſcriptures are not to be tried by them; but they by the ſcriptures; Iſa. viii 20. To the law and to the teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them

Q. 8. What may be fairly inferred from this propoſition, that the ſcriptures are the word of God?

A. Three things may be hence inferred. *Firſt*, The perfection of the ſcriptures, which being the only rule given by God, muſt therefore be perfect. *Secondly*, That it is the right of common people to read them; John v. 39. Search the ſcriptures, Acts xvii. 11. Theſe were more noble than thoſe of Theſſalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo. *Thirdly*, That we owe no obedience to the injunctions of men, farther than they are ſufficiently warranted by the written word; Matth. xv. 9. But in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Of Faith and Obedience.

Queſt. 3. WHat do the ſcriptures principally teach?

A. *The ſcriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.*

Q. 1. Why is faith conjoined with obedience, and put before it?

A. Becauſe faith is the principle from whence all obedience flows; and no man can perform any duty aright in the eſtate of unbelief; Heb. xi. 6. But without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him; for he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is,

Q. 2. Can there be no ſaving faith where the ſcriptures are not known and preached?

A. No; for the apoſtle ſaith, Rom. x. 14, 15. How then ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a preacher? and how ſhall they preach except they be ſent? And ver. 17. So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Q. 3. Are not we bound to believe what learned men teach us, as points of faith, though the things they teach be not contained in the word of God.

A. No; if the things they teach be not contained expreſly, or by neceſſary conſequence in the word of God, we are not obliged to believe them as points of faith; Iſa. viii. 20. To the law, and to the teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them: Gal. i. 8. Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed. And Chriſt hath charged us, Matth. xxiii. 10. To call no man maſter, for one is your maſter, even Chriſt.

Q. 4. Are there ſome things in ſcripture more excellent than others; becauſe it is ſaid, the ſcriptures principally teach matters of faith and duty?

A. Every part of ſcripture is alike pure; Prov. xxx. 5. Every word of God is pure, and of equal authority, but not of equal weight; as ſeveral pieces of gold are alike pure, and of the ſame ſtamp, but not of equal value.

Q. 5. What may be inferred hence for uſe?

A. *Firſt*, Hence it is our duty to examine what we hear, by the word; and not receive any doctrine becauſe men confidently affirm it, but becauſe the ſcriptures require it; Acts xvii. 11. Theſe were more noble than thoſe of Theſſalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether theſe things were ſo. *Secondly*, That the Chriſtian religion is not notional, but practical; and that impractical faith ſaves no man; James ii. 20. Faith without works is dead.

God is a Spirit.

Queſt. 4. WHat is God?

A. *God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs, and truth.*

Q. 1. Can the nature of God be defined, ſo as men may expreſs properly and ſtrictly what God is?

A. No; Job xi. 7. Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? canſt thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

We do then conceive moſt rightly of God, when we acknowledge him to be unconceivable: and therefore, one being aſked the queſtion, what God is? anſwered rightly; If I fully knew that, I ſhould be a God myſelf; for God only knows his own eſſence.

Q. 2. How many ways are there by which men may know and deſcribe the nature of God, though ſtill with imperfect knowledge?

A. There are two ways of knowing God in this life. *Firſt*, By way of affirmation; affirming that of God by way of eminence, which is excellent in the creature; as when we affirm him to be wiſe, good, merciful, *&c. Secondly*, By way of negation, when we remove from God, in our conceptions, all that is imperfect in the creature; ſo we ſay, God is immenſe, infinite, immutable; and in this ſenſe we alſo call him a Spirit, *i. e.* he is not a groſs corporeal ſubſtance.

Q. 3. How many ſorts of ſpirits are there? and of which ſort is God?

A. There be two ſorts of ſpirits, created and finite, as angels, and the ſouls of men are. *Secondly*, Uncreated, and infinite; and ſuch a Spirit God only is, infinitely above all other ſpirits.

Q. 4. If God be a Spirit, in what ſenſe are we to underſtand all thoſe ſcriptures which ſpeak of the eyes of the Lord, the ears and hands of God?

A. We are to underſtand them as expreſſions of God, in condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of our underſtanding; even as the glory of heaven is expreſſed to us in ſcripture by a city, and the royal feaſt. Theſe ſhadows are uſeful to us whilſt we are in the body; but we ſhall know him in heaven after a more perfect manner.

Q. 5. What may be inferred from the ſpiritual nature of God?

A. Hence learn, that it is both ſinful and dangerous to frame an image or picture of God. Who can make an image of his ſoul, which yet is not ſo perfect a ſpirit as God is? And as it is ſinful to attempt it, ſo it is impoſſible to do it; Deut. iv. 15, 16. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourſelves; for ye ſaw no manner of ſimilitude, on the day that the Lord ſpake to you in Horeb, out of the midſt of the fire; leſt ye corrupt

ourſelves, and make you a graven image, the ſimilitude of any figure, *&c.*

Q. 6. What elſe may be inferred from thence?

A. That our ſouls are the moſt noble and excellent part of us, which moſt reſembles God; and therefore our chief regard and care ſhould be for them, whatever becomes of the vile body; Matth. xvi. 26. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

Q. 7. What further truth may be inferred hence?

A. That men ſhould beware of ſpiritual ſins, as well as of groſs and outward ſins; for there is a filthineſs of the ſpirit, as well as of the fleſh; 2 Cor. vii. 1. Let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit; and as God ſees them, ſo he greatly abhors them, as ſins that defile the nobleſt part of man, on which he ſtamped his own image.

Q. 8. What alſo may be inferred from hence?

A. Hence we learn, that ſpiritual worſhip is moſt agreeable to his nature and will; and the more ſpiritual it is, the more acceptable it will be to him; John iv. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth. Externals in worſhip are of little regard with God; as places, habits, geſtures, *&c.*

Apply this,

Firſt, To ſuperſtitious men, Iſa. lxvi. 1, 2, 3.

Secondly, To children, that ſay a prayer, but mind not to whom, nor what they ſay.

Of God's Infinity.

Queſt. 1. WHAT is the ſenſe and meaning of this word, [infinity?]

A. It ſignifies that which hath no bounds or limits, within which it is contained, as all created things are.

Q. 2. In how many reſpects is God infinite?

A. God is infinite or boundleſs in three reſpects.

Firſt, In reſpect of the perfection of his nature; his wiſdom, power, and holineſs, exceed all meaſure and limits; as 1 Sam. ii. 2 There is none holy as the Lord, *&c.* *Secondly*, In reſpect of time and place; no time can meaſure him; Iſa. lvii. 15. Thus ſaith the high, and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity; 1 Kings viii. 27. Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much leſs this houſe which I have built? The heaven of heavens contains all created beings; but no

the Creator. *Thirdly*, In reſpect of his incomprehenſibleneſs, by the underſtanding of all creatures; Job xi. 7. Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty to perfection?

Q. 3. If God be thus infinite, and no underſtanding can comprehend him, how then is it ſaid in 1 John iii. 2. We ſhall ſee him as he is?

A. The meaning is not, that glorified ſaints ſhall comprehend God in their underſtandings; but that they ſhall have a true apprehenſive knowledge of God; and that we ſhall ſee him immediately, and not as we do now through a glaſs darkly.

Q. 4. What is the firſt leſſon to be learnt from God's infinity?

A. That therefore men ſhould tremble to ſin even in ſecret; Pſal. cxxxix. 11. If I ſay, ſurely the darkneſs ſhall cover me, even the night ſhall be light about me.

Q. 5. What is the ſecond inſtruction from hence?

A. The ſecond inſtruction is, That there is an infinite evil in ſin, objectively conſidered, as it is committed againſt an infinite God; and therefore it deſerves eternal puniſhment; and no ſatisfaction can poſſibly be made for it, but by the blood of Chriſt; 1 Pet. i. 18. Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold ——but with the precious blood of Chriſt.

Q. 6. What is the third inſtruction from God's infinity?

A. The third inſtruction is, that thoſe who are reconciled to God in Chriſt, need not fear his ability to perform any mercy for them; for he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk or think, Eph. iii. 20. And thoſe that are not reconciled, are in a very miſerable condition, having infinite power ſet on work to puniſh them; 2 Theſſ. i. 9. Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Q. 7. What is the fourth inſtruction from God's infinity?

A. That no place can bar the acceſs of gracious ſouls to God: They are as near him in a dungeon, as when at liberty; and that he knows their thoughts, when their tongues cannot utter them.

[*Eternal.*]

Queſt. 1. WHAT is it to be eternal, as God is?

A. The eternity of God is, to be without beginning, and without end; Pſal. xc. 2. From everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.

Q. 2. How doth God's eternity differ from the eternity of angels, and human ſouls?

A. It differs in two reſpects; *Firſt*, In this, that though angels, and the ſouls of men ſhall have no end; yet they had a beginning, which God had not. *Secondly*, Our eternity is by gift from God, or by his appointment; but his eternity is neceſſary, and from his own nature.

Q. 3. In what ſenſe is the covenant called an everlaſting covenant?

A. The covenant is called an everlaſting covenant, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. becauſe the mercies of it, conveyed to believers, as pardon, peace, and ſalvation, are mercies that ſhall have no end.

Q. 4. In what ſenſe is the goſpel everlaſting?

A. The goſpel is called the everlaſting goſpel, Rev. xiv. 6. becauſe the effects thereof, upon the ſouls it ſanctifies, will abide in them for ever.

Q. 5. In what ſenſe is the redemption of Chriſt called the eternal redemption?

A. The redemption of Chriſt is called eternal redemption in Heb. ix. 12. becauſe thoſe whom he redeems by his blood, ſhall never more come into condemnation; John v. 24. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation, but is paſſed from death unto life.

Q. 6. Why is the laſt judgment of the world by Chriſt, called eternal judgment?

A. The laſt judgment is called eternal judgment, not becauſe God judged men from eternity, or becauſe the day of judgment ſhall laſt to eternity; but becauſe the conſequences of it will be everlaſting joy or miſery to the ſouls of men; therefore it is called eternal judgment; Heb. vi. 2.

Q. 7. What may wicked men learn from the eternity of God?

A. Hence wicked men may ſee their own miſery in the perfection of it; that they will have an eternal enemy to avenge himſelf upon them for ever, in the world to come; 2 Theſſ. i. 9. Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord.

Q. 8. What may good men learn from it?

A. That their joy and happineſs will be perfect and endleſs, who have the eternal God for their portion; Pſal. xvi. 11.

In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Q. 9. What may all men, good and bad, learn from it?

A. All men may learn three things from the eternity of God: *First*, That their life is a thing of nought compared with God; Psal. xxxix. 5. Mine age is as nothing before thee. *Secondly*, That sins, or duties, long since committed, or performed, are all present before God. *Thirdly*, That God can never want opportunity to do his work, and carry on his designs in the world. All time is in the hand of the eternal God; Rev. xii. 12. The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Of God's Unchangeableness.

Quest. 1. WHAT scriptures plainly assert this attribute?

A. Exod. iii. 14. And God said unto Moses, I AM that I AM. Dan. vi. 16. For he is the living God, and stedfast for ever; James i. 17. With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Q. 2. Whence doth God's immutability flow?

A. The immutability of God flows from the perfection of his nature, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken away. If any thing could be added to make him better than he is; or if any thing could be taken away, to make him less good than he is, then he were not the chiefest good, and, consequently, not God.

Q. 3. By what other argument prove you his immutability?

A. I prove it from the eternity of God. If God be eternal, he must be immutable: for if he change by addition of something to him he had not before, then there is something in God which he had not from eternity: And if he change by diminution, then there was something in God from eternity, which now is not; but from everlasting to everlasting he is the same God, and therefore changeth not.

Q. 4. But it is said, God repents, and repentance is a change: How then is he unchangeable, and yet repents?

A. In those phrases God speaks to us, as we must speak of, and to him; not properly, but after the manner of men; and it only notes a change in his outward providence, not in his nature.

Q. 5. But how could God become man, and yet no change made on him?

A. There is a twofold change; one active, made by God, that we allow: He made a change upon our nature by uniting

in to Chriſt; but a paſſive change made upon God, we deny. The nature of man was made more excellent, but the divine nature was ſtill the ſame.

Q. 6. What is the firſt inſtruction from God's immutability?

A. That thoſe that are moſt unchangeable in holineſs, are moſt like God: Let him that is holy be holy ſtill.

Q. 7. What is the ſecond inſtruction hence?

A. That the happineſs of God's people is firm and ſure, being ſtill upon the word of an unchangeable God; Mal. iii. 6. For I am the Lord; I change not: therefore ye ſons of Jacob are not conſumed, Heb. vi. 18.

Q. 8. What is the third inſtruction from this attribute?

A. That the hopes of all wicked men are vain, being built upon a preſumption, that God will not deal with them as he hath threatened he will do.

Q. 9. What is the laſt inſtruction from God's immutability?

A. That Chriſtians may take as much encouragement now from the nature, word, and providence of God, as the ſaints in any former generation did, or might do; for he is the ſame now he was then.

Of God's Wiſdom.

Queſt. 1. HOW manifold is the wiſdom of God?

A. There is a perſonal and eſſential wiſdom of God; the perſonal wiſdom is the Son of God; 1 Cor. i. 24. Chriſt, the power of God, and the wiſdom of God; Col. ii. 3. In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. The eſſential wiſdom of God is the eſſence of God; of which this queſtion ſpeaks.

Q. 2. What is the eſſential wiſdom of God?

A. The eſſential wiſdom of God is his moſt exact and perfect knowledge of himſelf and all his creatures, and his ordering and diſpoſing them in the moſt convenient manner, to the glory of his own name; Eph. i. 11. According to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.

Q. 3. What is the firſt property of God's wiſdom?

A. The firſt property is, he is only wiſe; Rom. xvi. 27. To God, only wiſe, be glory: And whatſoever wiſdom is in angels, or men, is all derived and borrowed from God, but his from none; Iſa. xl. 14. With whom took he counſel? and who inſtructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and ſhewed to him the way of underſtanding?

Q. 4. What is the ſecond property of God's wiſdom?

A. The ſecond property is, that he is incomprehenſible in his wiſdom; Rom. xi. 33, 34. O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God, *&c.*

Q. 5. What is the third property of the wiſdom of God?

A. The third property is, that God is perfectly wiſe, which no creatures, no, not the very angels in heaven are; Job iv. 18. And his angels he chargeth with folly.

Q. 6. What is the moſt glorious and eminent diſcovery of the wiſdom of God?

A. The moſt glorious diſplay of the wiſdom of God, was in the work of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; Col. ii. 3. In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge; 1 Cor. i. 24. Chriſt the wiſdom of God.

Q. 7. What is the firſt inſtruction from God's wiſdom?

A. The firſt inſtruction is, that God is a fit object of our truſt, dependance, and reſignation; Iſa. xxx. 18. And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment; bleſſed are all they that wait for him.

Q. 8. What is the ſecond inſtruction from hence?

A. The ſecond inſtruction is, that it is a dangerous arrogancy in the creature, either to preſcribe unto God, and direct his Maker; Job xxi. 22. Shall any teach God knowledge, ſeeing he judgeth thoſe that are high? Or to quarrel with his providences, as not ſo fit and convenient as they ſhould be; Job xl. 2. Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty inſtruct him? He that reproveth God, let him anſwer it.

Q. 9. What is the third inſtruction from it?

A. That the people of God have much reaſon to quiet, and encourage themſelves, when crafty and ſubtil enemies ſurround them; for the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men, 1 Cor. i. 25.

Q. 10. What is the fourth inſtruction from God's wiſdom?

A. The fourth inſtruction is, that the true way to wiſdom, is to be ſenſible of your own folly; 1 Cor. iii. 18. If any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe. And to apply ourſelves by prayer to God the foundation of it, Jam. i. 5. If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk it of God.

Q. 11. What is the laſt inſtruction from God's wiſdom?

A. That the ſtudy of Chriſt, and of the ſcriptures, is to be preferred to all other ſtudies in the world; Col. ii. 3. In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. And

the ſcriptures contain all that wiſdom which is for our ſalvation; 1 Cor. ii. 17. But we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom which God ordained, before the world, unto our glory.

Of God's Power.

Queſt. 1. WHat is the power of God?

A. An eſſential property of his nature, whereby he can do all things that he pleaſes to have done; Jer. xxxii. 17. Ah Lord God, behold, thou haſt made the heavens and the earth by thy great power, and ſtretched-out arm; and there is nothing too hard for thee.

Q. 2. What evidences have we before our eyes of the almighty power of God?

A. It appears in the creation of the world; Rom. i. 20. For the inviſible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. And its ſuſtentation; Heb. i. 3. Who upholdeth all things by the word of his power.

Q. 3. Did God's power ever act its utmoſt?

A. No; he can do more than ever he did, or ever will do; Matth. iii. 9. God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham, Matth. xxvi. 53.

Q. 4. Are there not ſome things which God cannot do?

A. Yes, there are; but they are ſuch things as are inconſiſtent with his truth and holineſs; Tit i. 2.——which God, that cannot lie; 2 Tim. ii. 13. He cannot deny himſelf.

Q. 5. What is the firſt thing inferred from God's power?

A. That all the creatures neceſſarily depend on him for what ability they have; and without the permiſſion of the ſupreme power they can do us no hurt; John xix. 11. Thou couldeſt have no power againſt me, except it were given thee from above.

Q. 6. What is the ſecond inference from hence?

A. That the difficulties which lie in the way of the promiſes, need be no ſtumbling-blocks to our faith; Rom. iv. 20, 21. He ſtaggered not at the promiſes through unbelief, being fully perſuaded, that what he had promiſed he was able alſo to perform.

Q. 7. What is the third inference from this attribute?

A. The ſaints need not be ſcared at the greatneſs of their ſufferings; their God can carry them through; Dan. iii. 17. Our God, whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace.

Q. 8. What is the fourth inference?

A. That the ſalvation of God's people is certain, whatever their dangers be, being kept by this mighty power; 1 Pet. i. 5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation.

Q. 9. What is the laſt inference hence?

A. That the ſtate of the damned is unconceivably miſerable; their puniſhment proceeding from the glory of the Almighty; 2 Theſſ. i. 9. Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.

Of God's Holineſs.

Queſt. 1. HOW manifold is the holineſs of God?

A. The holineſs of God is twofold; communicable, or incommunicable; of his communicable holineſs the apoſtle ſpeaks, Heb. xii. 10. But he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs. Of his incommunicable holineſs that ſcripture ſpeaks, 1 Sam. ii. 2. There is none holy as the Lord.

Q. 2. What is the eſſential and incommunicable holineſs of God?

A. It is the infinite purity of his nature, whereby he delights in his own holineſs, and the reſemblance of it in his creatures, and hates all impurity; Hab. i. 13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity.

Q. 3. What is the firſt property of God's holineſs?

A. He is eſſentially holy: Holineſs is not a ſeparable quality in God, as it is in angels and men; but his being and his holineſs are one thing.

Q. 4. What is the ſecond property of God's holineſs?

A. God is eſſentially holy, the author and fountain of all communicated holineſs; Lev. xx. 8. I am the Lord which ſanctifieth you.

Q. 5. What is the third property?

A. That the holineſs of God is the perfect rule and pattern of holineſs to all creatures; 1 Pet. i. 16. Be ye holy, for I am holy.

Q. 6. What is the firſt inſtruction?

A. That the holieſt of men have cauſe to be aſhamed and humbled, when they come before God; Iſa. vi. 3, 5. And one cried unto another, ſaying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Then ſaid I, Woe is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips, &c.

Q. 7. What is the ſecond inſtruction from God's holineſs?

A. That there is no coming near to God without a Mediator; for our God is a conſuming fire.

Q. 8. What is the third inſtruction from God's holineſs?

A. That holineſs is indiſpenſibly neceſſary, to all thoſe which ſhall dwell with him in heaven; Heb. xii. 14. And holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.

Q. 9. What is the fourth inſtruction from hence?

A. That the goſpel is of ineſtimable value, as it is the inſtrument of conveying the holineſs of God to us; 2 Cor. iii. 18. But we all with open face, beholding as it were in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.

Q. 10. What is the laſt inſtruction from God's holineſs?

A. That all the deſpiſers of, and ſcoffers at, holineſs, are deſpiſers of God; for holineſs is the very nature of God; and in the creature it is his repreſented image.

Of God's Juſtice.

Queſt. 1. WHAT is the juſtice of God?

A. The juſtice of God is the perfect rectitude and equity of his nature; whereby he is juſt in himſelf, and in all his ways towards the creatures; Deut. xxxii. 4. He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity: juſt and right is he.

Q. 2. What is the firſt property of God's juſtice?

A. That it infinitely excels all human juſtice in the perfection of it. No creature can compare in juſtice with God; Job ix. 2. How ſhall man be juſt with God?

Q. 3. What is the ſecond property of God's juſtice?

A. That he is univerſally righteous in all his adminiſtrations in the world; Pſal. cxlv. 17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Q. 4. What was the greateſt demonſtration of the juſtice of God, that ever was given to the world?

A. The greateſt evidence that ever was given of the juſtice of God, was in his exacting full ſatisfaction for our ſins of Chriſt; Rom. iii. 25, 26. Whom God hath ſet forth, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I ſay, at this time, his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which e-

lieveth in Jeſus, Rom. viii. 32. He ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered him up for us all.

Q. 5. What is the ſecond diſcovery of God's juſtice?

A. The ſecond diſcovery of the juſtice of God, is in the eternal puniſhment of ſin in hell, upon all that do not repent, and come to Chriſt by faith, in this world; Rom. ii. 5. But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Q. 6. What is the third evidence of God's juſtice?

A. The third evidence of the juſtice of God, is in making good all the mercies he hath promiſed to believers, exactly to tittle; 1 John i. 9. If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day.

Q. 7. What is the firſt inference from God's juſtice?

A. That ſinners have no cauſe to complain of God's judgments, though they be never ſo terrible or durable; Rom. ii. 5. But after thy hardneſs, and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Q. 8. What is the ſecond inference from God's juſtice?

A. That without doubt there is a judgment to come in the next life, otherwiſe God would not have the glory of his juſtice; Eccleſ. iii. 16, 17. I ſaw under the ſun the place of judgment, that wickedneſs was there; and the place of righteouſneſs, that iniquity was there; I ſaid in mine heart, God ſhall judge the righteous, and the wicked.

Q. 9. What is the third inference from God's juſtice?

A. That penitent and believing ſinners need not doubt of the forgiveneſs of their ſins; 1 John i. 9. If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.

Q. 10. What is the laſt inference from it?

A. The laſt inference is, that meekneſs and patience under afflictions, is our unqueſtionable duty; and murmuring againſt God, is a great ſin and evil; Lam. iii. 39. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?

Of God's Goodneſs.

Queſt. 1. WHat is the goodneſs of God?

A. It is an eſſential property of his nature,

whereby he is abſolutely and perfectly good in himſelf, and the fountain of all communicated goodneſs to the creature; Pſal. cxix. 68. Thou art good, and doſt good, teach me thy ſtatutes.

Q. 2. How doth the goodneſs of God differ from the mercy of God?

A. It differs in its objects; for miſery is the object of mercy; but goodneſs extends to the creatures that are happy, as well as miſerable, as the angels; Pſal. cxlv. 9. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Q. 3. What is the firſt property of God's goodneſs?

A. That all his other attributes flow out of it as their fountain: the other acts of God are but the effluxes of his goodneſs; Exod. xxxiii. 19. And he ſaid, I will make all my goodneſs paſs before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will ſhew mercy unto whom I will ſhew mercy. Exod. xxxiv. 6. And the Lord paſſed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth.

Q. 4. What is the ſecond property of the divine goodneſs?

A. That it is ſupreme, and perfect in itſelf, ſo as the goodneſs of no creature is, or can be; Luke xviii. 19. None is good ſave one, and that is God: And conſequently above all additions from the creature; Pſal. xvi. 2. O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, My goodneſs extendeth not unto thee.

Q. 5. What is the third property of God's goodneſs?

A. That it is communicative with pleaſure and delight to the creature: no mother draws out her breaſt to an hungry child with more pleaſure than God doth his goodneſs to the ſaints; Pſal. cxlv. 9. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Q. 6. In what acts hath God firſt manifeſted his goodneſs?

A. He hath manifeſted it in the creation and government of the world; Pſal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all.

Q. 7. What was the principal work in which God hath manifeſted his goodneſs to men?

A. The principal manifeſtation of God's goodneſs, was in the work of redemption by Chriſt; Rom. v. 8. God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us. 1 John iv. 9. In this was manifeſted the love of

God towards us, because that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Q. 8. But are not the judgments of God on the wicked, and his afflictions on the saints, impeachments of his goodness.

A. No; it is the property of goodness, to hate and punish evil in the impenitent; Exod. xxxiv. 7. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, *&c.* And the afflictions of the saints flow from his goodness, and end in their true and eternal good; Heb. xii. 6. For whom the Lord loveth, he chastneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, Psal. cxix. 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.

Q. 9. What may we infer from the goodness of God?

A. The first thing is, that sin hath made our natures base, and disingenuous, in that we take no notice of his goodness; Isa. i. 3. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider; and answer not the design of it; Rom. ii. 4. Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.

Q. 10. What is the second inference from the goodness of God?

A. That therefore God is the fittest object of our delight, and love, and of our trust and confidence. (1.) Of our delight and love; Psal. cxvi. 1. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications. (2.) Of our trust and confidence; Psal. xxxiv. 8. O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Q. 11. What is the third inference from God's goodness?

A. That Christians should imitate God in his goodness, in charity to our enemies; Matth. v. 44, 45. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

Q. 12. What is the last inference from God's goodness?

A. That Christians have great encouragement to go to God for pardon in case of sin; Psal. cxxx. 4. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared; and for refuge in dangers. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; he knoweth them that trust in him, Nahum i. 7.

Of God's Truth.

Quest. 1. WHat is the truth of God?

A. It is an essential property of his na-

pre, whereby he is perfectly faithful in himſelf, and in all hat he hath ſpoken; Deut. xxxii. 4. He is the rock, his word is perfect, for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he, Pſal. cxix. 142. Thy righteouſneſs is an everlaſting righteouſneſs, and thy law is the truth.

Q. 2. What is the firſt property of Divine truth?

A. The firſt property of it, is, That it is eſſential and neceſſary to God; He cannot lie, Titus i. 2.

Q. 3. What is the ſecond property of it?

A. The ſecond property is, That it is everlaſting, and abiding to all generations; Pſal. c. 5. For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlaſting, and his truth endureth to all generations. Iſa. xxv. 1. O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt thee————thy counſels of old are faithfulneſs and truth.

Q. 4. What is the third property of Divine truth?

A. The third property is, that he is univerſally true in all his words and works. (1.) In all his words; John xvii. 17. Thy word is truth. (2.) In all his works; Pſal. xxv. 10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto ſuch as keep his covenant.

Q. 5. What is the firſt leſſon from God's truth to be learnt?

A. That truth and ſincerity of heart is that which is moſt ſuitable, and pleaſing to God; Pſal. li. 6. Behold thou deſireſt truth in the inward parts.

Q. 6. What is the ſecond leſſon from God's truth?

A. That whatever God hath foretold, ſhall aſſuredly come to paſs, and be fulfilled in his time; Joſh. xxiii. 14. Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord our God ſpake, concerning you; all are come to paſs unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

Q. 7. What is the third leſſon from the truth of God?

A. That a promiſe from God is full ſecurity to the faith of his people, and they may look upon it as good as a mercy in hand; Heb. x. 23. For he is faithful that promiſed.

Q. 8. What is the fourth leſſon from God's truth?

A. That whatever God hath threatned in his word againſt ſinners, ſhall ſurely come upon them, except they repent; Zech. i. 6. But my word, and my ſtatutes, which I commanded my ſervants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and ſaid, like as the Lord of hoſts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, ſo hath he dealt with us. Ezek. xii. 27, 28.

The word which I have ſpoken, ſhall be done, ſaith the Lord God.

Q. 9. What is the fifth leſſon from God's truth?

A. That falſehood, in words and actions, is contrary to God's nature, and abhorred by him; John viii. 44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the luſts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, becauſe there is no truth in him; when he ſpeaketh a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Q. 10. What is the laſt leſſon from God's truth?

A. The day of judgment will rightly and juſtly ſtate every man's condition; Rom. ii. 2. But we are ſure that the judgment of God is according to truth, againſt them which commit ſuch things.

Of one God.

Queſt. 5. ARE there more Gods than one?

A. *There is but one only, the living and true God?*

Q. 1. How doth it appear that there is but one God?

A. It is evident from ſcripture there is but one God; Deut. vi. 4. Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord. Jer. x. 10. But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlaſting King: and as ſcripture reveals no more, ſo reaſon will allow no more.

Q. 2. Why will reaſon allow no more but one God?

A. Becauſe God is the firſt being; Rev. i. 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt; and there can be but one firſt being, and God is the moſt perfect, and excellent being; Pſal. lxxi. 19. Thy righteouſneſs, alſo, O God, is very high, who hath done great things: O God, who is like unto thee? And there can be but one moſt perfect and excellent being.

Q. 3. But doth not the ſcriptures ſay, in 1 Cor. viii. 5. that there are gods many, and lords many?

A. Yes; there are many in title, and many in opinion, but one only in truth; Jer. x. 10. But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlaſting King.

Q. 4. Why is he called the true God?

A. To diſtinguiſh him from the idols and falſe gods of the heathens; 1 Theſ. i. 9. How ye turned to God from idols, to ſerve the living and true God. Acts xiv. 15. We preach unto you, that ye ſhould turn from theſe vanities unto the living

God, which made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all things that are therein.

Q. 5. Why is he called the living God?

A. Becauſe all life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal, is in him, and from him only. *Firſt*, Natural life; Acts xvii. 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being. *Secondly*, Spiritual life; Eph. ii. 1. You hath he quickened, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. *Thirdly*, Eternal life in glory; Col. iii. 4. When Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.

Q. 6. What is the firſt inſtruction from hence?

A. If but one God, then all his children ſhould be of one heart, having one and the ſame Father; Eph. iv. 5, 6. One Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Q. 7. What is the ſecond inference from hence?

A. That it is idolatry to perform worſhip to any other but God only; Pſal. lxxxvi. 9, 10. All nations whom thou haſt made, ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O Lord, and ſhall glorify thy name, for thou art great, and doſt wondrous things, thou art God alone.

Q. 8. What is the third inference from it?

A. That our ſupreme love is due to God only, and it is very ſinful to place it on any other; Deut. vi. 4, 5. Hear, O Iſrael, The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might.

Q. 9. What is the fourth inference from God's unity?

A. That God only muſt have the reliance and dependence of our ſouls; Jer. xvii. 5, 7. Thus ſaith the Lord, curſed be the man that truſteth in man, that maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord. Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in the Lord, and whoſe hope the Lord is.

Q. 10. What is the laſt inference from it?

A. That we have great cauſe to be thankful for the goſpel, which diſcovers the only true God to us; and that we are not as the heathens, worſhipping many and falſe gods; 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many, and lords many; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Of three Perſons in the Godhead.

Queſt. 6. HOW many perſons are there in the godhead?

A. *There are three perſons in the godhead, the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one God, the ſame in ſubſtance, equal in power and glory.*

Q. 1. What mean you by the word, godhead?

A. It is the nature, eſſence, or being of God, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Acts xvii 29. Foraſmuch then as we are the off-ſpring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold, or ſilver, or ſtone, graven by art, and man's device.

Q. 2. What is a perſon in the godhead?

A. It is the godhead diſtinguiſhed by perſonal properties; each perſon having his diſtinct perſonal properties; Heb. i. 3. Who being the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, upholding all things by the word of his power.

Q. 3. How doth it appear there are three perſons, and no more?

A. *Firſt*, From Chriſt's baptiſm; Mat. iii, 16, 17. And Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending, like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

Q. 4. How elſe, in the ſecond place, doth it appear?

A. From the inſtitution of our baptiſm; Mat. xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt.

Q. 5. What is the third proof from ſcripture?

A. From the apoſtolical benediction; 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the fellowſhip of the holy Ghoſt, be with you all, Amen: Where three diſtinct bleſſings are wiſhed from the three divine perſons in the godhead, *grace* from Chriſt, *love* from the Father, and *communion* with the Spirit.

Q. 6. What farther evidence is there of it in ſcripture?

A. From plain, poſitive aſſertions of the ſcripture, aſſerting, *Firſt*, A trinity of perſons. *Secondly*, A unity of eſſence; 1 John v. 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one.

Q. 7. What is the firſt inſtruction from the trinity?

A. That the doctrine of the goſpel concerning Chriſt, is fully confirmed and ratified by three witneſſes from heaven,

who are above all exceptions; 1 John v. 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghoſt.

Q. 8. What is the ſecond inſtruction from the trinity?

A. Hence we learn the true order and manner of worſhipping God, in the Son; John xvi. 23. Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he ſhall give it you. And by the Spirit; Eph. vi. 18. Praying always, with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit.

Q. 9. What is the third inſtruction from the trinity?

A. That the covenant of grace conveys a rich portion to believers, in making over all three perſons to them; Jer. xxxi. 33. But this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.

Q. 10 What is the fourth inſtruction from the trinity?

A. That as it is the duty of all the ſaints to give diſtinct glory to the three perſons in the Godhead; ſo it will be a ſpecial part of their bleſſedneſs in heaven, to contemplate the diſtinct benefits received from them all; Rev. i. 5. And from Jeſus Chriſt, who is the faithful witneſs, and the firſt begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth; unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.

Of God's Decrees.

Queſt. 7. WHat are the decrees of God?

A. *The decrees of God are his eternal purpoſe, according to the counſel of his will, whereby for his own glory he hath foreordained whatſoever comes to paſs.*

Q. 1. What things are decreed of God?

A. All things whatſoever come to paſs, even the ſmalleſt; Eph. i. 11. In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.

Q. 2. What is the end of God's decrees?

A. The glory of his own name; Eph. i. 11, 12. Who worketh all things according to the counſel of his own will, that we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory, who firſt truſted in Chriſt.

Q. 3. But there are ſome evil things done in the world; Do they fall under God's decree?

A. Though God doth neither approve them, nor neceſſitate

men to commit them, yet he doth permit and ſuffer them to be done, and will turn them to his own glory; Acts iv. 27, 28. For of a truth, againſt thy holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael are gathered together, for to do whatſoever thy hand, and thy counſel determined before to be done.

Q. 4. Who are the objects of God's ſpecial decrees?

A. Angels and men are the objects of God's ſpecial decrees; 1 Tim. v. 21. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect angels, that thou obſerve theſe things, &c. Rom. viii. 33. Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?

Q. 5. What is the firſt property of God's decrees?

A. That they are moſt wiſe acts of God, laid in the depth of wiſdom and counſel; Rom. xi. 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways are paſt finding out!

Q. 6. What is the ſecond property of God's decrees?

A. The decrees of God are moſt free, all flowing from the mere pleaſure of his will; Rom. ix. 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Q. 7. What is the third property of God's decrees?

A. They are moſt firm and ſtable; 2 Tim. ii. 19. Nevertheleſs, the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure; having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, Zech. vi. 1.

Q. 8. What is the fourth property of God's decrees?

A. They are eternal, and before all time; Acts xv. 18. Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.

Q. 9. What is the fifth property of God's decrees?

A. They are moſt pure, and altogether unſpotted of ſin; 1 John i. 5. This is the meſſage which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, That God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all.

Q. 10. What is the firſt inſtruction from God's decrees?

A. That we ought to aſcribe nothing to chance, but to the appointment or providence of God; Prov. xvi. 33. The lot is caſt into the lap; but the whole diſpoſing thereof is of the Lord.

Q. 11. What is the ſecond inſtruction from God's decrees?

A. That God's hand is to be acknowledged in the greateſt afflictions that befal us; 2 Sam xvi. 11 And David ſaid to Abiſhai, and to all his ſervants, behold, my ſon, which came

forth of my bowels, ſeeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him.

Q. 12. What is the laſt inſtruction from God's decrees?

A. That we ought to be thankful to God for all the good, and patient under all the evils that befal us; Job ii. 10. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil?

Queſt. 8. HOW doth God execute his decrees?

A. *God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.*

Of the Creation.

Queſt. 9. WHAT are the works of creation?

A. *The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the ſpace of ſix days, and all very good.*

Q. 1. What is it to create?

A. To create, is to give a being to that which had no being; or to bring ſomething out of nothing; Heb. xi. 3. Through faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; ſo that things which are ſeen were not made of things that do appear.

Q. 2. How did God create the world?

A. By his infinite power, executed in his word of command; Pſal. xxxiii. 6, 9. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth; for he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt.

Q. 3. What attributes of God ſhine forth in the creation?

A. The wiſdom of God ſhines forth glorioufly, not only in their formation, but dependance one upon another; Pſal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wiſdom haſt thou made them all: The earth is full of thy riches.

Q. 4. What may we learn from the creation?

A. That God perfectly knows all that is in the creature, be it never ſo ſecret; Pſal. xciv. 8, 9. Underſtand, O ye brutiſh among the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wiſe? He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee?

Q. 5. What is the ſecond inſtruction from the creation?

A. That God is the rightful owner of us all, and may do what he will with us; Rom. ix. 20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God! ſhall the thing formed ſa

to him that formed it, why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel to honour, and another to diſhonour?

Q. 6. What is the third inſtruction from the creation?

A. That God only is the proper object of worſhip; Jer. x. 11. Thus ſhall he ſay unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens, and the earth, even they ſhall periſh from the earth, and from under theſe heavens.

Q. 7. What is the fourth inſtruction from hence?

A. That Chriſtians ſhould not fear the power of creatures, ſince they derive their being and power from God; Iſa. liv. 16, 17. Behold, I have created the ſmith that bloweth the coals in the fire, that bringeth forth an inſtrument for his work; and I have created the waſter to deſtroy; no weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper.

Q. 8 What is the fifth inſtruction from hence?

A. That Atheiſm is a ſin againſt natural light and reaſon; Rom. i. 20. For the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe.

Q. 9. What is the ſixth inſtruction from hence?

A. That God's glory is the end of all being; Col. i. 16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.

Q. 10. What is the ſeventh inſtruction from hence?

A. That there is an unnatural rebellion in ſin, ſmiting at him that made and preſerves our being; Iſa. i. 6. I have nouriſhed and brought up children, and they have rebelled againſt me.

Q. 11. What is the eighth inſtruction from hence?

A. That God can in a moment revive and ſave the church when at the loweſt ebb; Iſa. lxv. 18. Behold, I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Q. 12. What is the laſt inſtruction from hence?

A. That it is eaſy with God to revive a dejected ſoul; Iſa. lvii. 19. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, ſaith the Lord; and I will heal him.

Of Man's Creation.

Queſt. 1. HOW did God create man?

A. *God created man male and female,*

after his own image, in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs, with dominion over the creatures.

Q. 1. How did God create man?

A. God created man in his own image; Gen. i. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.

Q. 2. What is meant by the image of God?

A. Not a reſemblance of God in any bodily ſhape or figure, but in holineſs; Eph. iv. 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

Q. 3. In what graces did man reſemble God?

A. In ſuch a knowledge of God himſelf, and the creatures, which made him happy; Col. iii. 10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.

Q. 4. In what other graces did this image conſiſt?

A. In righteouſneſs as well as holineſs; Eph. iv. 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

Q. 5. What is the firſt inference from hence?

A. The deplorable miſery of the fall; Rom. v. 12. Wherefore as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.

Q. 6. What is the ſecond inſtruction from hence?

A. The beauty of holineſs, which is the image of God, and the excellency of man; Pſalm xvi. 3. But to the ſaints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.

Q. 7. What is the third inſtruction from hence?

A. We have infinite cauſe to bleſs God for Chriſt, who repairs this loſt image in his people; Eph. iv. 23. And be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind.

Q. 8. What is the fourth inſtruction from hence?

A. That the deſpiſers of holineſs are the deſpiſers of God; for holineſs is God's image.

Q. 9. What is the fifth inſtruction from hence?

A. The excellency of ſanctification, which defaces the image of Satan, and draws the image of God upon the ſoul of man.

Of Divine Providence.

Queſt. 11. WHAT are God's works of providence?

A. *God's works of providence, are his*

moſt holy, wiſe, and powerful preſerving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Q. 1. How doth it appear that there is a divine providence?

A. It appears by plain ſcripture teſtimonies; Heb. i. 3. Upholding all things by the word of his power. Col. i. 17. By him all things conſiſt. Luke xii. 6, 7. Are not five ſparrows ſold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God; but even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Q. 2. How elſe is providence evinced?

A. By ſcripture emblems; as Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder ſet upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; behold the angels of God aſcended and deſcended on it: And Ezekiel's wheels, Ezek. i. 20. Whitherſoever the ſpirit was to go, they went, thither was their ſpirit to go, and the wheels were lifted up over againſt them, for the ſpirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

Q. 3. What farther ſcripture evidence is there?

A. The ſure accompliſhment of ſcripture predictions; as Iſrael's captivity, and deliverance from Egypt and Babylon; Chriſt's incarnation; the riſe and ruin of the four monarchies; Dan. ii. 31. Thou, O king, ſaweſt, and, behold, a great image, whoſe brightneſs was excellent, ſtood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. Dan. vii. 3. And four great beaſts came up from the ſea, diverſe one from the other.

Q. 4. What is its firſt act about the creatures?

A. It ſuſtains, preſerves, provides for them; Pſalm cxlv. 15, 16. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou giveſt them their meat in due ſeaſon; thou openeſt thine hand, and ſatisfieſt the deſire of every living thing, and defendeſt them from danger. Pſalm xxxvi. 6. Thy righteouſneſs is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep; O Lord, thou preſerveſt man and beaſt.

Q. 5. What is the ſecond act of providence about the creatures?

A. It rules and governs the creatures and their actions; Pſalm lxvi. 7. He ruleth by his power for ever, his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themſelves.

Q. 6. How manifold is divine providence?

A. It is common and general over all, or ſpecial and peculiar to ſome men; 1 Tim. iv. 10. Who is the Saviour of all men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe.

Q. 7. How is providence exerciſed about ſinful actions?

A. In permitting them; Acts iv. 16. In reſtraining them; Pſalm lxxvi. 10. Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee, and the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain. And overruling them to good; Gen. l. 20. But as for you, ye thought evil againſt me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to paſs, as it is this day, to ſave much people alive.

Q. 8. What are the properties of providence?

A. It is (1.) Holy; Pſalm clv. 17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. (2.) Wiſe; Pſal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all. (3.) Powerful; Dan. iv. 35. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What doſt thou?

Q. 9. What is the firſt inſtruction from it?

A. That God's people are ſafe amidſt all their enemies and dangers; 2 Chron. xvi. 9. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe hearts are perfect towards him.

Q. 10. What is the ſecond inſtruction?

A. That prayer is the beſt expedient to proſperity and ſucceſs of our lawful affairs; Pſalm cxlv. 18. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

Q. 11. What is the third inſtruction from it?

A. That God's people ſhould reſt quietly in the care of his providence for them in all their ſtraits; Matth. vi. 26. Behold the fowls of the air, for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet our heavenly Father feedeth them: are not ye much better than they?

Q. 12. What is the laſt inſtruction from it?

A. That it is no ſmall privilege to be adopted children of God, and the members of Chriſt; for all is ordered for their eternal good; Eph. i. 22, 23. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.

Of the Covenant of Works.

Queſt. 12. WHAT ſpecial act of providence did God exerciſe towards man, in the eſtate wherein he was created?

A. *When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding*

him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

Q. 1. What was God's covenant with Adam before the fall?

A. It was to give life and happineſs upon condition of perfect perſonal obedience; Gal. iii. 12. The law is not of faith; but the man that doth them, ſhall live in them.

Q. 2. Was this covenant made only with Adam, or with him and his poſterity?

A. It was made with him, and all his natural poſterity, deſcending in the ordinary way of generation from him; Rom. v. 12. Wherefore as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned. Ver. 14, and 18. Nevertheleſs, death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion, who is the figure of him that was to come: Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men unto juſtification of life.

Q. 3. Was Adam able to perform the obedience required of him in that covenant?

A. Yes; for he was made upright; Eccl. vii. 29. God made man upright; but they have ſought out many inventions.

Q. 4. Had this covenant any Mediator?

A. No; he neither had, nor needed any Mediator for ſatisfaction, becauſe no ſin was in him; nor interceſſion, for he wanted nothing.

Q. 5. Did this covenant admit of no repentance, nor accept any ſhort endeavours?

A. No, it did not; but ſentenceth and curſeth the tranſgreſſors of it, for the leaſt breach; Gal. iii. 10. Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Q. 6. How was this threatening fulfilled, of dying the day he eat, ſeeing he lived 930 years?

A. He died ſpiritually that day; and though the ſentence on his body was reſpited in order to poſterity, yet then his body received the death's wound, of which afterward he died.

Q. 7. What is the firſt inference from Adam's covenant?

A. Miſerable are all they that grow on the natural root of the firſt Adam: Gal. iv. 21, 22. Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two ſons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman.

Q. 8. What is the ſecond inference?

A. That God is juſt in all the puniſhments and miſeries that come upon man; yea, infants that never ſinned after his ſimilitude; Rom. v. 14. Nevertheleſs death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion.

Q. 9. What is the third inference?

A. The glorious privilege of believers, who are under a better covenant, eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes; Heb. viii. 6. But now hath he obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how much alſo he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which is eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes.

Q. 10. What is the laſt inference?

A. That we ſhould pity the unregenerate, eſpecially our own among them; and labour to plant them in the ſecond Adam.

Of the Fall of Man.

Queſt. 13. DID our firſt parents continue in the eſtate wherein they were created?

A. *Our firſt parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the eſtate wherein they were created, by ſinning againſt God.*

Q. 1. How doth it appear that man is fallen?

A. By the ſcripture hiſtory: An account of it is in Gen. iii. 6, 7. And when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, ſhe took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave alſo unto her huſband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they ſewed fig-leaves together, and made themſelves aprons; and they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God, amongſt the trees of the garden. And the ſad experience we all have of it in ourſelves; Rom. v. 12. Therefore as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.

Q. 2 How could man fall, ſince he was made upright?

A Though he was upright, yet his will was mutable; and by abuſing that liberty he fell; Eccleſ. vii. 29. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have ſought out many inventions.

Q. 3. How did God leave him to abuſe the freedom of his will?

A. Not by inclining him to abuſe it; but by with-holding that further grace which he was no way obliged to continue to him.

Q. 4. Did the will of man loſe its liberty to good, by the fall?

A. Yes, it did, and is ſo wounded, that it cannot, without thy preventing and regenerating grace, put forth one ſpiritual and ſaving act; Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10. For by grace are ye ſaved, through faith, and that not of yourſelves; it is the gift of God, not of works, leaſt any man ſhould boaſt; for we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, *&c.*

Q. 5. What was the aggravation of Adam's ſin?

A. It was aggravated in his being a public innocent perſon, ſo newly placed in a ſtate of happineſs and liberty.

Q. 6. What is the firſt inference from the fall?

A. That the beſt creature left to himſelf, cannot be long ſafe; as the angels, and Adam; Pſal. xlix. 12. Nevertheleſs, man being in honour abideth not; he is like the beaſts that periſh.

Q. 7. What is the ſecond inference?

A. That ſince man could not be his own keeper, he can be much leſs his own ſaviour; 2 Cor. iii. 5. Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves; but our ſufficiency is of God.

Q. 8 What is the third inference?

A. That it is impoſſible for the covenant of works to juſtify any one; Rom. iii. 20. Therefore by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight; Rom. viii. 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh; God ſending his own Son, in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh.

Q. 9. What is the laſt inference?

A. What cauſe have we to bleſs God for Chriſt, who recovered us when the fall left us helpleſs? Rom. v. 6. For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly.

Of Sin.

Queſt. 14. WHat is ſin?

A. *Sin is any want of conformity unto, or tranſgreſſion of the law of God.*

Q. 1. What is meant by the law?

A. The commands and rules flowing from God's ſovereignty,

whereby his will is manifeſted, and the creature bound to obedience.

Q. 2. Where is this law written?

A. It is written either in the heart; Rom. ii. 15. Which ſhews the work of the law written in their hearts, (which we call the law of nature); or in the Bible, which we call the written moral law.

Q. 3. What conformity is due to this law of God?

A. A twofold conformity is due to it: *Firſt*, Internal, in our hearts. *Secondly*, External, in our lives; and the want of either is ſin; 1 John iii. 4. Whoſoever committeth ſin, tranſgreſſeth alſo the law; for ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law.

Q. 4. How doth it appear that the want of internal conformity is ſin?

A. Becauſe the law requires it; Mark xii. 30. And thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength; for this is the firſt commandment: And condemns the want of it? Rom. vii. 7. What ſhall we ſay then? Is the law ſin? God forbid! nay, I had not known ſin but by the law; for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.

Q. 5. Is nothing a ſin but what is againſt God's law?

A. No, nothing can be a ſin but what God hath either expreſly, or by conſequence forbidden in his word.

Q. 6. Wherein lies the evil of tranſgreſſing God's law?

A. The evil of ſin principally lies in the offence and wrong done to God, whoſe ſovereignty it labours to ſhake off, and deſpiſes his will; Pſal. li. 4. Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.

Q. 7. What further evil is in ſin?

A. It highly wrongs the ſinner's ſoul, by defacing, defiling, and damning it; Prov. viii. 36. But he that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul: all they that hate me, love death.

Q. 8. Wherein is the evil of ſin manifeſted?

A. It is manifeſted in the death of Chriſt, the terrors of conſcience, and torments of hell.

Q. 9. What courſe muſt the ſinner take to recover himſelf out of his miſery?

A. Repentance towards God, faith towards Chriſt, and both evidenced by new obedience; Acts xx. 21. Teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. 10. What may we infer from hence?

A. That we have infinite cauſe to bleſs God for Chriſt's ſatisfaction of the law for our ſins.

Of the Tree of Knowledge.

Queſt. 15. WHat was the ſin whereby our firſt parents fell from the eſtate wherein they were created?

A. *The ſin whereby our firſt parents fell from the eſtate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.*

Q. 1. Why was this tree called the tree of knowledge?

A. Not from any natural efficacy it had to give knowledge, but the knowledge he ſhould have by eating, or not eating, was experimental knowledge. *i. e.* Knowledge to his ſorrow.

Q. 2 Why did God forbid him this tree?

A. *Firſt*, For the diſcovery of his dominion over man. *Secondly*, For the trial of his ſubjection and obedience. *Thirdly*, For the aggravation of his ſin, if he ſhould eat.

Q. 3. What evil was there in eating of it?

A. There was a twofold evil, the evil of ſin, and the evil of puniſhment, both very great.

Q. 4. What was the evil of ſin?

A. A threefold evil of ſin. *Firſt*, Againſt God, called diſobedience; Rom. v. 19. For as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners. *Secondly*, Againſt himſelf, ſoul, body, and eſtate. *Thirdly*, Againſt his poſterity; Rom. v. 12. Wherefore as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.

Q. 5. What was the evil of puniſhment?

A. *Firſt*, Loſs of God's image. *Secondly*, Horror of conſcience. *Thirdly*, Sorrow on the female ſex. *Fourthly*, Curſe on the creature. *Fifthly*, Expulſion from paradiſe. *Sixthly*, Death both of body and ſoul.

Q. 6. What is the firſt inſtruction from it?

A. To take heed of ſmall beginnings of temptations, and to reſiſt it in the firſt motions; James iii. 5. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.

Q. 7. What is the ſecond inference?

A. Not to hold a parly with the tempter; ſee 2 Cor. xi. 3. But I fear leſt by any means, as the ſerpent beguiled Eve, through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.

Q. 8. What is the third inference?

A. That Satan's policy lies much in the choice of his tempting inſtruments; as Eve and Peter, *&c.*

Q. 9. What is the fourth inference?

A. A neceſſity of keeping ſtrong guards on our ſenſes; Iſa. xxxiii. 15. That ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil, he ſhall dwell on high, his place of defence ſhall be the munition of rocks.

Q. 10. What is the fifth inference?

A. That covenant-breaking is a heinous ſin, which God will puniſh; Hoſea viii. 1. He ſhall come as an eagle againſt the houſe of the Lord, becauſe they have tranſgreſſed my covenant, and tranſgreſſed againſt my laws.

Q. 11. What is the laſt inference?

A. That the corruption of our nature is much ſeen in deſiring forbidden things; Rom. vii. 7. What ſhall we ſay then? Is the law ſin? God forbid: Nay, I had not known ſin, but by the law; for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.

Of the Fall of Adam, and ours in him.

Queſt. 16. DID all mankind fall in Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion?

A. *The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himſelf, but for his poſterity, all mankind deſcending from him by ordinary generation, ſinned in him, and fell with him in his firſt tranſgreſſion.*

Q. 1. Did no man ever eſcape the ſin of Adam?

A. Yes, the man Chriſt Jeſus did, and he only; Heb. vii. 26. For ſuch an High Prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners.

Q. 2. Why was not Chriſt tainted with it?

A. Becauſe he came into the world in an extraordinary way; Matth. i. 18. Now the birth of Jeſus Chriſt was on this wiſe: When as his Mother Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph, before they came together, ſhe was found with child of the holy Ghoſt.

Q. 3. How doth it appear all others are tainted with it?

A. It appears by ſcripture-teſtimony, Rom. v. 12. Wherefore as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned; and experience of the beſt men, Rom. vii. 21. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.

Q. 4. How came all men to fall with Adam?

A. Becauſe all were included in Adam's covenant, as a man's covenant includes his children before they be born, or the treaſon of the father affects his poſterity.

Q. 5. What infer you from hence?

A. The ſtupendous wiſdom of God in ſending Chriſt in our nature, and yet without the ſin and taint of it; 1 Cor. i. 24. Chriſt the wiſdom of God.

Q. 6. What is the ſecond inference?

A. Hence we learn the admirable love of Chriſt in taking our nature, with all the ſinleſs infirmities thereof; Rom. viii. 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh.

Q. 7. What is the third inference?

A. The neceſſity of our union with Chriſt, in order to our participation of his righteouſneſs and redemption; 1 Cor. xv. 22. For as in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.

Q. 8. What is the fourth inference?

A. Hence we learn the malignant and mortal nature of ſin, inaſmuch as one ſin defiled and deſtroyed a whole world.

Q. 9. What is the fifth inference?

A. That though all be not equally ſenſible of their need, yet one ſinner needs Chriſt as much as another.

Q. 10. What is the laſt inference?

A. That no man hath any cauſe or reaſon to boaſt of the goodneſs of his nature, ſince the beſt were by nature under the ſame ſin and miſery as the worſt; Eph. ii. 3. Among whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt, in the luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others.

Of Original Sin.

Queſt. 17. INto what eſtate did the fall bring mankind?

A. *The fall brought mankind into an eſtate of ſin and miſery.*

Queſt. 18. WHerein conſiſts the ſinfulneſs of that eſtate whereinto man fell?

A. *The ſinfulneſs of that eſtate whereinto man fell, conſiſts in the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin, the want of original righteouſneſs, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original ſin, together with all actual tranſgreſſions which proceed from it.*

Q. 1. How many ſorts of ſin are all men under?

A. All men are guilty before God of two ſorts of ſin; of original, and of actual; Pſal. li. 5. Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me. Eccleſ. vii. 20. For there is not a juſt man upon earth, that doth good, ſinneth not.

Q. 2. How can we be guilty of Adam's firſt ſin?

A. We are guilty of it, becauſe Adam ſinned not only as a ſingle, but alſo as a public perſon, and repreſentative of all mankind: Rom. v. 15, 16, 17. But not as the offence, ſo alſo is the free gift: for if through the offence of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jeſus Chriſt, hath abounded unto many: And not as it was by one that ſinned, ſo is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation.

Q. 3. How elſe came we under his guilt?

A. We are guilty of his ſin by generation; for we were in his loins, as treaſon ſtains the blood of the poſterity, or parents leproſy the children; Pſalm li. 5. Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.

Q. 4. Wherein doth it conſiſt?

A. It conſiſts in two things. *Firſt*, In our averſation and enmity to that which is good; Rom. vii. 18. In me, that is, in my fleſh, there dwelleth no good thing. *Secondly*, In proneneſs to that which is evil; Rom. vii. 14. But I am carnal, ſold under ſin.

Q. 5. Is this corruption of nature in all men?

A. Yes; in all mere men, and women, none exempted; Rom. iii. 10. and 23. As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one, for all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God.

Q. 6. In what part of our nature doth this ſin abide?

A. It abides in the whole man, in every part of man, both ſoul and body; Gen. vi. 5. God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 1 Theſ. v. 23. Now the God of peace ſanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body, be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. 7. How is the body infected by it?

A. In the readineſs of the bodily members to further ſin, and its temptations in the ſoul; Rom. iii. 13, 14, 15. Their throat is an open ſepulchre, with their tongues they have uſed deceit, the poiſon of aſps is under their lips, whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs, their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood.

Q. 8. What learn we from original ſin?

A. To bear patiently the miſeries we ſee on our children, and their death alſo without murmuring; Rom. v. 14. Nevertheleſs death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over ther

that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion.

Q. 9. What is the ſecond inſtruction?

A. It teaches us humility, and ſhould be matter of confeſſion and humiliation, when we ſin actually; Pſal. li. 5. Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.

Q. 10. What is the third inſtruction?

A. It ſhould provoke parents to uſe their utmoſt diligence for the converſion of their children who draw ſin from them.

Q. 11. What is the laſt inſtruction?

A. It teaches us the neceſſity of regeneration, and ſhould provoke us greatly to deſire it.

Of Man's Miſery.

Queſt. 19. WHat is the miſery of that eſtate whereinto man fell?

A. *All mankind by their fall loſt communion with God, are under his wrath and curſe; and ſo made liable to all the miſeries in this life, to death itſelf, and to the pains of hell forever.*

Q. 1. What communion had God with man before the fall?

A. Man then enjoyed the gracious preſence and favour of God with him, which was better than life.

Q. 2. How doth it appear this was loſt by the fall?

A. It appears by ſcripture-teſtimony, that Adam loſt it as to himſelf; Gen. iii. 8. And Adam and his wife hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden. And we in him; Eph. ii. 12. At that time ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world.

Q. 3. Was this the only miſery that came by the fall.

A. No; man did not only loſe communion with God, but fell under his wrath and curſe; Eph. ii. 3. And were by nature children of wrath, even as others.

Q. 4. Doth the wrath and curſe of God then lie on all men?

A. It lies on all the unregenerate in the world; Gal. iii. 10. Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them: But believers are delivered from it by Chriſt; 1 Theſ. i. 10. Even Jeſus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Q. 5. How are the miſeries of man by the fall divided?

A. They are divided into the miſeries of this world, and of the world to come.

Q. 6. What are the miſeries that come on them in this world?

A. The miſeries of life; as ſickneſs, pain, poverty or the

body; fear, trouble, sorrow on the mind, and at last death itself; Rom. vi. *ult.* The wages of sin is death.

Q. 7. What are the miseries after this life?

A. The pains and torments of hell for ever; Psal. ix. 17. The wicked shall be turned into hell.

Q. 8. What are the torments of hell?

A. Pain of loss, and pain of sense; Matth. xxv. 41. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.

Q. 9. What learn you from hence?

A. The woful state of the unconverted; miserable here, and miserable to eternity.

Q. 10. What else learn we hence?

A. The great salvation believers have by Christ from all this misery; Heb. ii. 3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

Of the Salvation of God's Elect, and of the Covenant of Grace.

Quest. 20. DID God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. *God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery; and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.*

Q. 1. Are some persons chosen to salvation and others left?

A. Yes: God hath chosen some to salvation, and passed by others; as the Scriptures speak; See Rom. viii. 30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called. And Jude 4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, *&c.*

Q. 2. Did God chuse some, because he foresaw they would be better than others?

A. No: God's choice was not on foreseen works, but merely of his grace, and good pleasure of his will; Eph. i. 5, 6. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace.

Q. 3. Is this election of God made in time, and that according as men use their free-will, or from eternity?

A. Election is an eternal act of God before the world was, and depends not on man's using his free-will; as appears from Eph i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the

foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love.

Q. 4. Shall all that are elected, be called and ſaved?

A. Yes, the ſcripture is full and plain for it; Acts xiii. 48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Rom. viii. 30. Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called, *&c.*

Q. 5. By whom are the elect ſaved?

A. By Chriſt, the only Redeemer; Titus iii. 4, 5, 6. But after that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy, he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghoſt, which he ſhed on us abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.

Q. 6. Is there no other way of ſalvation but by Chriſt?

A. No, no other way is revealed in ſcripture; Acts iv. 12. Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.

Q. 7. What learn you from God's election?

A. What cauſe we have to admire free-grace in our choice, who were no better than others; Eph. ii. 3. And were by nature children of wrath even as others.

Q. 8. What is the ſecond inſtruction?

A. It teaches us humility; we made not ourſelves to differ, but the free-grace of God made the difference; 1 Cor. iv. 7. For who maketh thee to differ from another?

Q. 9. What is the third inſtruction?

A. It teaches us diligence to make our election ſure to ourſelves, by our calling; 2 Pet. i. 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure.

Q. 10. What is the fourth inſtruction?

A. It is matter of comfort to God's elect, amidſt all dangers in the world; 2 Tim. ii. 19. Nevertheleſs, the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.

Of the Covenant of Grace.

Queſt. 1. WHat is the covenant of grace?

A. It is a new compact, or agreement, made with ſinners, out of mere grace, wherein God promiſeth to be our God, and that we ſhall be his people, and to give everlaſting life to all that believe in Chriſt; Jer. xxxi. 33. But

this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael, after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.

Q. 2. How doth this covenant differ from the covenant of works?

A. They differ many ways; but principally in three things. *Firſt*, The covenant of works had no Mediator; the covenant of grace hath a Mediator; Heb. xii. 24. And to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant. *Secondly*, In the former, no place was found for repentance; in the *ſecond*, God admits it; Heb. viii. 10. For this is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael, after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people; v. 12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins will I remember no more. *Thirdly*, In their condition, the former requires exact obedience; the latter faith and ſincere obedience; Mark. xvi. 16. He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved.

Q. 3. May a ſinner that hath no worthineſs at all of his own, be taken into the covenant of grace?

A. Yes, he may; Iſa. xliii. 25. I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins. This covenant is not of works, but of grace, Rom. xi. 6. And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwiſe grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work.

Q. 4. Is this covenant changeable, or an unchangeable covenant?

A. No, it is not changeable, but everlaſting and unchangeable for ever; Iſa. liv. 10. For the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.

Q. 5. What are the principal things beſtowed in this covenant?

A. God himſelf, and in and with him pardon and ſalvation; Jer. xxxi. 33. I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.

Q. 6. Can no ſin be forgiven out of this covenant?

A. No, God pardons none out of this covenant; John iii. 18. But he that believeth not is condemned already.

Q. 7. What is is the firſt inſtruction hence?

A. Humbled and believing ſinners have ſingular ſupport from this new covenant, 1 John ii. 12. I write unto you, little children, becauſe your ſins are forgiven you for his name's ſake.

Q. 8. What is the ſecond inſtruction from hence?

A. That it is the great concern of all men to examine whether they be in this covenant, or no; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Examine yourſelves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownſelves; know ye not your ownſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Q. 9. What is the third inſtruction?

A. See here the miſerable ſtate of the wicked, which have no intereſt in it; Pſalm l. 16. But unto the wicked God ſaith, What haſt thou to declare my ſtatutes, or that thou ſhouldſt take my covenant in thy mouth?

Q. 10. What is the laſt inſtruction?

A. That Chriſtians are obliged to walk as people in covenant with God; 1 Pet. ii. 9. But ye are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.

Of the only Redeemer.

Queſt. 21. WHO is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. *The only Redeemer of God's elect, is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and ſo was, and continueth to be God and man, in two diſtinct natures, and one perſon for ever.*

Q. 1. What doth the name Redeemer ſignify?

A. It ſignifies one that frees another out of captivity and bondage, as Chriſt did us; Matth. xx. 28. And to give his life a ranſom for many.

Q. 2 What was the miſery from which Chriſt delivered us?

A. A twofold miſery, *viz.* Sin and hell. *Firſt*, Sin; Matth. i. 21. Thou ſhalt call his name JESUS, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins. *Secondly*, Hell; 1 Theſ. i. 10. Even Jeſus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.

Q. 3. How did Chriſt deliver us from this miſery?

A. *Firſt*, By price. *Secondly*, By power. By price; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Ye are not redeemed with ſilver and gold from your vain converſation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot. By power; Col. i. 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Q. 4. When was the redemption wrought by Christ?

A. It was decreed from eternity; it was actually wrought on the cross; Col. i. 20. And (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Q. 5. How then could they be redeemed that died before?

A. Though Christ's blood was actually shed after the Old Testament believers died; yet the virtue of Christ's death extends to them, as well as us; Heb. xi. 39, 40. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Q. 6. Why would not God deliver us without such a Redeemer?

A. Because it was not so much for the honour of his justice; Rom. iii. 25, 26. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Q. 7. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. That all that are out of Christ are in a miserable bondage and captivity; John viii. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Q. 8. What is the second instruction?

A. Hence see the heinous nature of sin, which required such a price to satisfy for it; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. We were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.

Q. 9. What is the third instruction from hence?

A. The wonderful love of Christ in redeeming us at such a rate; Rev. i. 5. Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Q. 10. What is the last instruction?

A. This strongly obligeth us to an universal holiness; 1 Cor. vi. 20. For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Of Christ's Incarnation.

Quest. 22. HOW did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. *Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself*

true body, and a reaſonable ſoul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghoſt in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without ſin.

Q. 1. Who is the only Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt is their only Redeemer, and there is no other Redeemer beſides him; Acts iv. 12. Neither is their ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.

Q. 2. How is he the Son of God, or can be, as no other is ſo?

A. He is the Son of God by nature, from all eternity, and ſo no angel or ſaint is; Heb. i. 5. For unto which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?

Q. 3. Why was it neceſſary he ſhould become man?

A. That he might be capable to ſuffer death in our room; Heb. ii. 15, 16, 17. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham; wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high prieſt, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people.

Q. 4. Why muſt the Redeemer be God as well as man?

A. Becauſe the blood of a mere man could not ſatisfy and redeem us; Acts xx. 28. Feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.

Q. 5. Do theſe two natures make two perſons?

A. No, the human nature is united to the ſecond perſon, and ſubſiſts in union with it; John i. 14. And the word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Q. 6. Was the union only for a time?

A. No, it continues and abides for ever; Heb. vii. 24. But this man, becauſe he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable prieſthood.

Q. 7. What is the firſt inſtruction from hence?

A. Hence we learn the tranſcendent love of God to poor ſinners; John iii. 16. God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.

Q. 8 What is the ſecond inſtruction?

A. Hence we learn the matchleſs love of Chriſt, that he ſhould ſtoop to ſuch a condition for us; 2 Cor. viii. 9. For ye

know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.

Q. 9. What is the third inſtruction?

A. That the greateſt ſins are capable of remiſſion to believers; John i. 29. Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the ſins of the world.

Q. 10. What is the fourth inſtruction?

A. That thoſe that be in Chriſt need not fear the denial or want of any other mercy; Rom. viii. 32. He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?

Q. 11. What is the fifth inſtruction?

A. Hence we learn how impious it is to aſcribe any part of the glory of redemption to any other beſides Chriſt.

Q. 12. What is the ſixth inſtruction?

A. This teaches us the miſerable condition of all that are out of Chriſt, and the neceſſity of their damnation, he being the only Redeemer.

Of the Manner of Chriſt's Incarnation.

Queſt. 1. WAS Chriſt's incarnation a voluntary act in him?

A. Yes, it was; for though he had a command to die for us, John x. 18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myſelf; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. Yet he came willingly; Pſalm xl. 6, 7. Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire, mine ears haſt thou opened; burnt-offerings, and ſin-offerings haſt thou not required; lo, I come; in the volume of thy book, it is written of me. Ver. 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.

Q. 2. Was the body of Chriſt a real and true human body?

A. Yes, it was a true and real body, not the appearance and ſhape of a body only; Luke xxiv. 38. And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? Ver. 39. Behold my hands, and my feet, that it is I myſelf; handle me, and ſee, for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones as you ſee me have.

Q. 3. Had he a true human ſoul as well as a body?

A. Yes, he had a real human ſoul alſo, and all the natural faculties and powers thereof; Matth. xxvi. 38. Then ſaith he unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death.

Q. 4. Was he then in all reſpects like to other men?

A. No, his conception was not like others; Iſa. vii. 14. Be